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PROOFS

THAT THE COMMON

THEORIES AND MODES OF REASONING

RESPECTING

THE DEPRAVITY OF MANKIND

EXHIBIT IT AS

A PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTE,

WITH

A VIEW OF THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE

RELATIVE TO

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF MAN

AS

A MORAL AGENT.

NEW-YORK:

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Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the second day of April, in the forty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, F. & R. Lockwood, of the said District, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as Proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

"Proofs that the Common Theories and modes of Reasoning respecting the Depravity of Mankind exhibit it as a Physical Attribute, with a view of the Scriptural Doctrine relative to the Nature and Character of Man as a Moral Agent."

IN CONFORMITY to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of Learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned." And also to an Act entitled "An Act supplementary to an act entitled An Act for the encouragement of Learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

JAMES DILL,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

INTRODUCTION.

That the Scriptures represent mankind as never obeying the law of God, while left without the renovating influences of the Divine Spirit, and as assuming that character in consequence of the first transgression of their great progenitor, none, it is believed, who render themselves familiar with the sacred page, can easily fail to perceive. Accordingly by far the greater portion of the Christian world have in all ages united in regarding those doctrines as revealed truths; and in considering the former, particularly, as one of the most prominent and important taught in the inspired volume. But in their speculations in regard to the *reason* that mankind pursue that course of conduct, they appear to have formed conceptions respecting the *nature* of man,—conceptions that in their system of belief have of course mingled with the truths imbibed from the Scriptures relative to the *character* of man—which not only are not authorized by the sacred volume, but are inconsistent with what are admitted to be some of its most obvious and momentous truths. Such it is imagined has been, and is now the fact, with at least a large part of the protestant world,

and was likewise with many who flourished antecedently to the Reformation.

The error to which allusion is made lies in the views generally presented in the writings both of the past and present day, and exhibited in the pulpit and in conversation, respecting the *nature* of mankind as *moral agents*.

Those views, to a certain extent, and the methods employed to vindicate and enforce them, indicate and are adapted to produce an impression that the sins of men arise from some disorder, defect, or depravity in their *physical constitution*, derived from their common father, and inflicted on him and them in consequence of his eating the forbidden fruit, and so wrought into his and the nature of man universally, as to become a portion of it, and be like any other essential property conveyed from parents to children by generation. This depravity, according to the statements and arguments respecting it with which the theological world abounds, if we admit the conclusions which those arguments and statements authorize, is the sole cause that men transgress the law of God; and its nature is such as renders them physically incapable of exercising holiness.

On its introduction, the human constitution became totally incompetent to that whole class of moral exercises which are excellent, and adequate only to those which are evil. Not indeed by utterly annihilating its moral powers, or disqualifying it for all voluntary action; but, as it would seem, by extinguishing a certain capacity belonging to it in its primeval state, and physically requisite to that species of operation which are morally excellent, though unne-

cessary to the exercise of the opposite class; much in the same manner as the capacity for that class of sensations of which the eye is the medium, is withheld from those persons who are formed without that organ; while they are left capable of the other kinds of sensation of which other organs are the instruments.

It is not by any means designed to insinuate that those into whose minds these conceptions have found their way, reject all the great doctrines of which such a belief is legitimately subversive; nor that they regard themselves as laying any foundation for all the fatal conclusions which it authorizes. The contrary, it is acknowledged. and with the highest pleasure, is most notoriously the fact. Though they are obviously much perplexed to make out the consistency of many of their positions; and after the utmost efforts of reason, seem still to carry with them some lurking feeling that they are entangled in at least apparent contradiction; yet as a body they formerly hold that mankind are blameable for their violations of the law of God; a considerable portion also represent them as capable of yielding obedience to the divine requirements; and they moreover, in large numbers at least, explicitly disown the doctrine of a physical depravity when imputed to them.

Still it is believed many of the opinions which they cherish and regard as of primary importance, involve that doctrine; and much of their language and reasoning is precisely such as they would naturally employ if they *ex animo* held it, plainly teaches it, and is fraught with much of the injurious influence which would result, were they without the intermixture of inconsistent opinions, formally

to announce the belief of a physical depravity as an article of their creed.

The reader is, therefore, desired to understand that it is not attempted here to make out that the authors to whom reference is made, never disown the doctrine of a physical depravitiy, nor exhibit opinions inconsistent with it; but merely that whatever other opinions may be avowed by them, many of the points of belief to which they have given a conspicuous place in their creed, in fact involve, and much of their language and argumentation directly inculcates that doctrine, and cannot be used but with the greatest impropriety unless that doctrine is regarded as true.

The first object then of the present discussion is, to show by quotations from theological works of extensive circulation and high repute, that, if many of the common statements and arguments relative to the subject are employed with any propriety, those views respecting the depravity of mankind are, at least virtually, extensively taught. Some considerations will then be adverted to, exhibiting their erroneousness; and a view presented of the constitution of man in relation to this subject, and of some conclusions for which it prepares the way respecting several other topics.

The quotations are regarded as presenting a fair specimen of views extensively entertained at the present day respecting the subjects to which they relate; and it is believed that at least most of the sentiments they express will be too readily recognized to leave it necessary to exhibit any farther evidence that they are held.

PART FIRST.

Proofs that such views are exhibited respecting the Depravity of Mankind.

THE following quotations present a specimen of the passages in which the existence of such a depravity is taught:

"Original sin is *an hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature*, diffused through *every part of the soul*, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and then produces in us those works which the scriptures denominate the works of the flesh."

"It was the apostle's design [in Rom. 3.] to teach, that all are overwhelmed by an irresistible calamity, from which they cannot escape, unless rescued by divine mercy: and as that could not be proved unless manifested by the overthrow and ruin of *nature*, he presented those testimonies [quotations from the Old Testament] by which he more than demonstrated that our nature is *ruined*. It follows, therefore, that men are such as they are there represented, *non pravæ duntaxat consuetudinis vitio sed naturæ quoque pravitate*; not only by the faultiness of a criminal course of *conduct*, but also by a *depravity* of *nature*; for the apostle's argument, that there is no salvation for man but in the grace of God, because in himself he is hopelessly ruined, cannot stand on any other principle."—*Inst. Cal. Lib. II. Cap. I.* 8. and *III.* 2.

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but is the *fault* and *corruption* of the *nature* of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated."—*The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.*

"We beleeve further, that in the beginning God created all the angels and men holy and good, and especially man in his likenesse, and to blessed immortality. But they, to wit, the angels and the two first of mankinde, did shortly after their creation, fall from God their creator; and have by such their fall, brought not only upon themselves the wrath of God, but also *such a pollution of their natures*, that now they *can no more* either will or accomplish any thing that is good: which pollution fell on the lost angels at *one time;* But mankinde *inherits* such defilement, together with the guiltiness both of the first and second death, *by propagation, one from another:* From whence it is that the same corruption of mankinde is called original sinne."—*Rolte's Translation of the Declaration of the Faith and Ceremonies of the Psaltzgrave Churches, Chap. II.*

The views of Arminius and his followers on the subject of original sin were expressed in the following language:

"True faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free will; since man in consequence of his *natural corruption* is *incapable* either of thinking or doing any good thing."—*Mosheim's Eccl. Hist.*

"We believe that through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind, which is *a corrup-*

tion of his *whole nature, and an hereditary disease*, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mothers' womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin; being in him as a root thereof."—*Confession of the Reformed Dutch Church.*

"The sinfulness of that estate whereinto men fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and *the corruption of his nature*, whereby he is utterly indisposed, *disabled*, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to evil."—*Westminster Confession.*

"Man's sinfulness as fallen, consists in *the corruption* of his *nature*, or a propensity and inclination to all evil, which is commonly called original sin; that is original sin *inherent* as distinguished from it as imputed to us. That the *nature* of man is *vitiated*, *corrupted*, and *prone* to all that is bad, is *taken for granted by all;* and indeed he that denies it, must be very much unacquainted with himself, or hardly retain the common notices which we have of good and evil." —*Ridgley's Body of Divinity.*

"Having proved the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity, what follows upon it is, *the corruption* of *nature* derived unto them from him; by which is meant the general depravity of mankind, of all the individuals of human nature, and of *all the powers and faculties of the soul*, and *members of the body.*"—*Gill's Body of Practical Divinity.*

"That the best men in the world do often commit sin, and have remaining pollution of heart, makes it abundantly evident that men when they are no otherwise than they were by nature, without any of those virtuous attainments, have a *sinful depravity*, yea must have *great corruption of*

nature. . . . . Makes it evident that man's *nature* is *corrupt* as he comes into the world."—*Edwards' Works*, *vol.* 6. *p.* 163, 164.

Mr. John Wesley referred to the ninth Article of the Church of England as expressing his views on the subject of original sin; and in discussing the topic in the *Minutes of Conference*, employed the following language: "In what sense is Adam's sin imputed to all mankind? In Adam all die; i. e. 1st. Our bodies then became mortal;—2d. Our souls died; i. e. were disunited from God. And hence; 3d. We are all born with *a sinful devilish nature;* by reason whereof,—4th. We are children of wrath, liable to death eternal."

"I am willing to regard the sufferings of the irrational tribes as a public token of the *depravation of their nature*, and I must by analogy regard the sufferings and death of infants as a token of *the depravity of a nature* created for *moral action*."—*Park Street Lectures*, *p.* 14.

The Christian Observer, which inculcates the same view respecting human nature, represents it as being as much a doctrine of Arminianism as it is of Calvinism.—*Vol.* 3. *p.* 361.

What now is the doctrine relative to mankind with which these passages are fraught? And the single question to be decided is, what is the great *subject* to which they refer? Are they employed solely in delineating the manner in which mankind *act?* Or instead of that, is the *physical nature* of man the grand topic of which they treat? And can any one persuade himself they are occupied merely in announcing that mankind while unregenerate uniformly transgress the law of God? that their authors, had it been their sole object to state that fact, would naturally have selected such terms as most happily adapted to express it, and resorted to such propositions and arguments to sustain

it? that such terms, declarations, and arguments *can have come from minds*, which not only had no *intention* of teaching the doctrine of a physical depravity, nor any belief of the *truth* of that doctrine, nor any lurking impressions or principles which were virtually *built* on it; but which explicitly regarded the created nature of man as entirely *free* from all corruption, and so far as constitutional powers and qualities are concerned, perfectly capable of acting in accordance with the divine will? All this must indeed be satisfactorily made out before it can be shown that the doctrine in question is not inculcated in these passages. But where are the materials for such a demonstration?

But to subject the question to a more thorough trial. That the depravity delineated in these quotations is purely physical; a property of the substance of the soul, is apparent.

I. From the terms used, which expressly designate it, not as a quality of actions, or a trait of character formed by the exercise of its voluntary powers, but as a property of *nature;* and of course therefore a physical attribute.

II. From the fact that it is represented as existing *antecedently* to the *exercise* of any *actions*, and while, therefore, beside mere existence, nothing but the physical properties of the soul can be predicated of it. Its antecedence to the commencement of moral action is more explicitly expressed in the following passages:

"Even infants themselves, although they bring their damnation with them from the womb, are condemned for their own, not for another's faultiness. For though they have not at *that time produced the fruits of their unrighteousness*, yet they have the *seed inclosed* in them; nay, their *whole nature* is a mere seed of sin, so that it cannot but be *odious* and *abominable* to God."

"And being so *vitiated and perverted in all the parts of our nature*, we are *already*, on account of *that corruption alone*, deservedly held *convicted* and *condemned* in the presence of God."—*Inst. Lib. II. Cap. I.* 8.

The same views are exhibited by President Edwards. The object of his treatise on original sin was, to prove, from the fact that the moral character of man while unrenewed is sinful, that there exists a depravity in his *nature* which is the *cause* of his exercising those sinful actions, and which of course therefore exists antecedently to their being exercised. A passage from that work verifying this statement will be presented to the reader under the next head.

But if this depravity thus belongs to the soul antecedently to its exercising any moral actions, can any reasoning be necessary to show that it must be a physical property? Can any one fancy that at that period any thing belongs to the mind except its mere substance? In what sense can a thing, which by the definition, is neither one of its operations, nor a property of any of its operations, be imagined to pertain to it at all, unless it is a portion, or an attribute of its substance?

III. From the fact, that it is represented as the *cause* or *source* of all the sinful actions which mankind exercise. The representation of Calvin in the passages quoted from him is, that "it first makes us obnoxious to God's wrath, and then *produces* in us *those works* which the scriptures denominate the works of the *flesh*." Nearly the same expressions are employed in the Confession of the Reformed Dutch Church; and similar views are exhibited by President Edwards, whose language is,

"All mankind are in such a state,....that they universally run themselves....into eternal perdition;....from which I *infer* that the *natural state* of the *mind* of man is attended with a

propensity of nature which is prevalent and *effectual* to such an issue;" and "this tendency....does not consist in any particular *external circumstances*....but is *inherent*, and is seated in that *nature* which is common to all mankind, which they carry with them wherever they go."—*His works*, *vol.* 6. *p.* 139. 149.

The position here assumed, that depraved actions are an effect of which an antecedently depraved nature is the cause, was thus formally laid down by him as the foundation of his reasoning in his treatise on original sin, in proof that the *nature* of man is corrupt; and he accordingly alleged *no other species whatever of evidence* to demonstrate the *depravity of nature*, than the simple fact that the *actions* of men are *sinful*. His argument ran simply thus: The disobedience of men has a cause, and it either lies in their *nature*, or *out* of it. But it cannot lie in any thing *out* of their nature—"in any external circumstances." Were it otherwise, it is incredible that amid the infinitely diversified circumstances into which men are thrown, they never assume such a modification as to give birth to holy actions. It must therefore be "inherent and seated in that nature which is common to man." And if the nature of man is the cause of his sinning. it must of course be depraved and odious. By proving therefore that all the *actions* of the unregenerate are depraved, he regarded himself as establishing the doctrine, that the *nature* of man is depraved. And by adopting a plan of reasoning which in that manner presented all the evidence that the actions of men are sinful, as proof of the depravity of their nature, he gave the doctrine a reality and prominence beyond what could have been imparted by a thousand mere declarations, and taught it with a plausibleness, energy, and efficacy which could scarcely have been attained by any other method.

The following language is employed on the subject by Mr. Wilberforce: "How, on any principles of common

reasoning, can we account for it," [the fact that all men sin,] "but by conceiving that man, since he came out of the hands of his Creator has contracted *a taint*, and that the *venom of this subtle poison* has been communicated throughout the race of Adam, every where exhibiting incontestible marks of its fatal malignity?" "Such" [that all men are sinners,] "on a full and fair investigation, must be confessed to be the state of facts; and how can this be accounted for on any other supposition, than that of some *original taint—some radical principle of corruption?* All other solutions are unsatisfactory; whilst *the potent cause* which has been *assigned* does abundantly, and can alone sufficiently account for the effect. Thus then it appears, that the *corruption of human nature* is proved by the same mode of reasoning as has been deemed conclusive in establishing the existence, and ascertaining the laws of the principle of gravitation; that the doctrine rests on the same solid basis as the sublime philosophy of Newton."—*Wilberforce's Practical View*, chap. II. sec. I.

The reasoning found in the Park-Street Lectures on this topic, p. 12. 17, 18, and which will be quoted under a subsequent head, proceeds on the same principle.

Dr. Woods, in his controversy with Dr. Ware, expresses himself thus on the subject:

"The uniformity of the fact that men become sinners denotes that it results from *the settled constitution of our nature*, and not from any *occasional* or accidental cause. We reason thus respecting things which uniformly take place in the *physical* world; and why not in the *moral* world? If our becoming sinners is not owing to *a steady law or principle of our nature*, but to some accidental cause, we should in all reason expect to find some exceptions."—*p.* 159, 160.

Accordingly he represents the depravity of man as "natural," "innate," and "resulting from the *original constitution*," in the same sense as are "original strength of mind, and liveliness of imagination," a "disposition to society," and "a propensity to sympathy or compassion;" and as "hereditary," in the same sense as is the "resemblance between children and parents with respect to any properties of body or mind."

It is on the same principle that the reasonings in innumerable other volumes on the subject rest; and is in short, it is believed, that on which all the arguments are founded that have ever been employed to prove that the created nature of man is depraved.

But—it can scarcely now be necessary to ask—is the depravity here described a *physical* depravity? Can it be any thing else? It being a quality of *nature*, in distinction from *actions*; that is of the *substance* of the soul, in distinction from its *operations*, it is of necessity a substantial quality. It being the *cause* of all the depraved actions which men exercise, it of course exists antecedently to the exercise of any of those actions; that is, at a period when nothing belonging to the soul has existence, except its mere substance; and must therefore be one of its physical attributes.

IV. It is represented as being conveyed from Adam to his posterity, and from one generation of his posterity to another, by *propagation*, in the same manner as other constitutional properties.

"We believe that original sinne descends unto us from Adam, by *birth* and *inheritance*."—*Articles agreed upon at Marpurge, in* 1529, *by Luther, Melancthon, Zwinglius and others.*

"Man was at his first creation far different from what all his posterity are, who deriving their origin from him after he

had become corrupt, have contracted from him an hereditary blemish."

"We thus learn that the impurity of parents is so transmitted to children, that all without exception are polluted by their origin. Nor can the beginning of this pollution be found, unless we ascend to the first parent of all as to the fountain. It is therefore to be regarded as certain that Adam was not the progenitor only of human nature, but the root as it were, and that therefore for a good reason the human species was vitiated by his corruption."

"It is not absurd at all, if on his becoming despoiled, [of the gifts which he received from God at his creation,] *nature* was reduced to nakedness and poverty,—if on his becoming corrupted by sin, the contagion crept into *nature;* just as from a decayed root rotten branches grow which transmit their putrescence to the other smaller shoots that spring from them. For children are vitiated in the parent in such a manner that they cause the corruption of their descendants."—*Inst. Lib. I. Cap. XV.* 8—*II. Cap. I.* 6, 7.

"Such as man was after the fall, such children did he beget—corruption by the righteous judgment of God being derived from Adam to his posterity, not by imitation, but by the *propagation* of a *vicious nature.*"—*Resolutions of the Synod of Dort in Buck's Theol. Dict. Article, Calvinism.*

"That the *corruption* of *nature* is conveyed by *generation* seems certain; for since *nature* is conveyed in that way, the *sin* of nature must also come in like manner."—*Gill's Body of Practical Divinity.*

"In Adam, as being in his loins when he thus apostatized we all sinned and fell under condemnation: his blood was attainted for rebellion, and thence that *evil nature originated,*

from which *all our personal transgressions proceed.*"—*Scott's Notes on Rom. V.*

"Now here is a wonder to be accounted for—sin tainting every individual of Adam's race in every age, country and condition, and surviving in every heart all exertions to destroy it. One would think this might prove, if any thing could, that sin belongs to the *nature* of *man*, as much as reason or speech, (though in a sense altogether compatible with *blame*,) and must be derived like other universal attributes of our nature from the original parent; *propagated* like reason or speech, (neither of which is exercised at first,) propagated like many other propensities, mental as well as bodily, which certainly are inherited from parents—propagated like the noxious nature of other animals."

"If the phenomenon is not accounted for in this easy and natural way, so analagous to that great law by which all animals propagate their kinds and their *dispositions*, it must remain to the end of time an unsolvable mystery."

"Now if all men are born depraved, there is the same evidence that depravity is propagated from father to son through all generations, as that speech or reason, or any of the natural affections are, (though in a sense entirely compatible with *blame*,) and so it is to be traced back equally with them to the original parent. But if, on the other hand, infants receive their whole nature from their parents pure; if when they leave the duct through which all properties are conveyed from ancestors, they are infected with no depravity, it is plain that they never derive a taint of moral pollution from Adam. There can be no conveyance after they are born, and his sin was in no sense the occasion of the universal depravity of the world, otherwise than merely as the first example."—*Park Street Lectures, p.* 12. 17, 18.

Such is the manner in which they have expressed themselves on this subject. Let us now inquire whether a depravity thus propagated must be a physical property or not; and that it must, few facts it is believed, within the compass of our knowledge, are capable of easier demonstration.

A depravity thus conveyed—it will be admitted—cannot lie at all in the *actions* of the being propagated. The doctrine is, that it is an attribute of *nature*, not of the *operations* of nature; and that it exists *antecedently* to the *exercise* of moral actions, and is the *cause* that those actions are sinful. Besides, who ever heard that *actions* are a subject of propagation? The perceptions, feelings, volitions, of offspring derived from their parents through that medium! What fancy more ridiculous ever entered the imagination?

Nor—it will also be admitted—can it lie at all in the *moral influence* under which the being propagated *exerts* his actions; nor in any thing else *external* to himself. The doctrine is, that it is an attribute of *himself*, not of any thing existing *without* him. And whoever heard that the external circumstances of children, or the moral influence under which their voluntary actions take place, are a subject of propagation? Is it indeed a fact that the ignorance or knowledge, the obscurity or distinction, the poverty or affluence, the temptations or restraints, which mark our career through life, are conveyed to us through that channel? As, then, it neither lies at all in any thing external to the being propagated, nor in any of its actions, it must of course exist entirely within the being *itself*—must constitute a portion of its physical nature.

Nothing manifestly beyond the mere physical nature can be a subject of propagation. The term indeed cannot be employed with any propriety to mean, at most, any thing more than the mere fact, that it is in connection with parental instrumentality that the being propagated comes into existence, and assumes that particular modification, or re-

ceives that structure which forms what is denominated its constitution, and by which it becomes a member of the species to which it belongs. And if the influence it denotes extends no farther than to determine the time when its subject comes into being, and the species of physical constitution with which it is endowed, it is of course expended wholly on that constitution, and gives birth to nothing but its physical properties. The depravity in question, therefore, if thus propagated, must be one of those properties.

V. The formal statements made relative to the nature of this depravity, exhibit the same views respecting it.

It is exhibited by Calvin, as consisting in such a deterioration of the mind, as renders it absolutely incapable both of that knowledge of God which is necessary to holiness, and of that class of volitions which are morally excellent. He regarded the mind as made up of the two faculties of understanding and will, and says of them:

"I am pleased with the opinion commonly held and derived from Augustine, that by sin the *natural* gifts in man were corrupted, and the *supernatural* extinguished."

After showing that by the latter he meant holy affections, and by the former the understanding and will, he proceeds:

"The corruption of the natural gifts consists in the loss of the soundness of the understanding, and the right state of the will; for although some residue of understanding and judgment survives together with will, yet we cannot call that understanding whole and sound, which is both weak and immersed in thick darkness; and the corruption of the will is too well known. As indeed reason, by which man perceives, judges, and discerns between good and evil, is an endowment belonging to his *nature*, it cannot be *wholly extinguished*, but it is partly *debilitated*, and partly *corrupted*, so that it appears a *shapeless ruin*. With this meaning John

said, the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not; which plainly declares both that in the perverse and degenerate nature of man sparks still glitter which show him to be a rational creature, and different from brutes, because he is endowed with intellect; and yet that that light is suffocated by great grossness of ignorance, so that he cannot effectually extricate himself."

"Why does not [the mind] comprehend that light [which shineth in darkness?] Because its *acumen*, quicksightedness, as far as the knowledge of God is concerned, is mere darkness; for the Spirit in calling men darkness, devests them at once of *all capability* of *spiritual understanding;* for which reason it is declared that believers are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of God: as though it were said, the unregenerate man is not *capable* of such sublime wisdom as to apprehend God and divine things, unless illuminated by the Spirit."

"He, I say, [that is carnal] does not comprehend any of the spiritual mysteries of God. Why so? because through sloth he *neglects* to? No—even if he *endeavours*, he *cannot at all;* because it is spiritually discerned. But what does that mean? That these things being entirely hidden to human perspicacity, are made known by the revelation of the Spirit *alone*."

As the capacity of the mind for knowledge depends entirely on its physical nature—physical, because the understanding has no other—the defect here ascribed to it, is of course purely of that kind.

His belief in regard to the will was, that though it is not utterly annihilated, yet it has lost that power which Adam at first possessed, of exercising either good or bad volitions, and become incapable of any except those which are sinful. His language is,

"The will has not indeed *perished*, because it is *inseparable* from the *nature* of man, but it is *so chained* by depraved lusts, that it is *not able* to aspire to any thing *good*."

"The will is held bound in such a subjection to *sin*, that it is *not able* to turn—much less, apply itself to that which is *good*."

And quoting from Augustine, "Man as he is corrupted by the fall sins indeed voluntarily, not unwillingly nor by compulsion—under the influence of strong passion, not by violent constraint—by the impulse of his own lust, not of external force;—*still*, such is the *depravity* of *nature*, that it is *not possible* for him to be excited to any thing but *evil*." —*Inst. Lib.* II. *Cap.* II. 12. 19, 20. *Cap.* III. 5.

His object in these passages was—not to teach the fact that the will does *not* choose any thing good—but that the voluntary powers are become so imperfect in consequence of the fall, that they are *physically incompetent* to the exercise of *good* volitions; though still able to exert the opposite class. This is manifest from his language, and is demonstrated by his employing the fact, that it *is so chained to lusts and subjected to sin* as it is; that is, the fact, that it *never chooses* any thing *good*, to prove that it *cannot* make a virtuous choice.

He thus regarded the voluntary powers of the soul, as having participated equally with the intellectual, in the great and fatal change supposed to have taken place in consequence of the fall: a change which he imagined left the mind capable only of knowing that which is earthly, and choosing that which is unholy.

The same views are exhibited in the following quotation from the Catechism and Confession of the Reformed Dutch Church:

"Being become wicked, perverse, and corrupt, in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and only retained a *few remains* thereof; which however are sufficient to leave man without excuse." "Are we then so corrupt that we are *wholly incapable* of doing any *good*, and inclined to all *wickedness? Indeed we are.*"

The theory of President Edwards exhibits this depravity as consisting in a want of adaptation in the nature of man to holiness. It represents human nature as such originally and in all cases, that—without a divine influence—it is utterly incompetent to any act that is morally excellent, destitute of the properties requisite for the exercise of such an act, and incapable therefore of being made to exert one by any combination of circumstances whatever; and consequently that there must be a superinduction on it, by the agency of the Spirit of God, of a new property, before it can be fitted for holiness. These views are expressed in the following quotation:

"The case with man was plainly this: When God made man at first, he implanted in him two kinds of principles. There was an *inferior* kind, which may be called *natural*, being the principles of mere human nature, such as self love, with those natural appetites and passions which belong to the *nature of man*, in which his love to his own liberty, honour, and pleasure were exercised. These when alone, and left to themselves, are what the scriptures sometimes call *flesh*. Beside these there were *superior* principles that were spiritual, holy, and divine, summarily comprehended in divine love, wherein consisted the spiritual image of God, and man's righteousness and true holiness, which are called in scripture the *divine nature*. These principles may, in some sense, be called *supernatural*, being (however concreated or connate, yet,) such as are

above those principles that are essentially implied in, or *necessarily* resulting from, and inseparably connected with, *mere human nature*, and being such as immediately depend on man's union and communion with God, or divine communications and influences of God's Spirit; which though withdrawn, and man's nature forsaken of these principles, human nature would be human nature still; man's nature as such being entire without these *divine principles*, which the scripture sometimes calls *spirit*, in contradistinction to *flesh*. These superior principles were given to possess the throne and maintain an absolute dominion in the heart. The other to be wholly subordinate and subservient. . . . . These divine principles thus reigning, were the dignity, life, happiness and glory of man's nature. When man sinned and broke God's covenant and fell under his curse, these superior principles left his heart." . . . . For indeed God left him,—that *communion* with *God* on which these principles *depended entirely*, ceased; the Holy Spirit, that divine inhabitant, forsook the house." "*Therefore*, immediately the *superior divine principles wholly ceased:* so *light ceases* in a *room* when the *candle* is *withdrawn;* and *thus* man was left in a state of *darkness*, *woful corruption*, and *ruin*—nothing but flesh without spirit. The inferior principles of self-love and natural appetite, which were given only to serve, being alone and left to themselves, *of course* became reigning principles, having no superior principles to regulate or control them. The immediate consequence of which was a *fatal catastrophe*, a turning of all things upside down, and the succession of a state of the most odious and dreadful confusion. . . . . It were easy to show how every lust and depraved disposition of man's heart would naturally arise from this *privative* original. . . . . Thus it is easy to give an account how total corruption of heart should follow on man's eating the forbidden fruit, though that was but one act of sin; *without God's putting* any evil into his heart, or

implanting any bad *principle*, or *infusing* any *corrupt taint*, and so becoming the *author* of depravity"—[An easy method indeed to escape the charge of teaching that God introduced such a principle *on man's fall*, by representing that it was implanted there *originally*, and was only kept in check by other constitutional properties which were upheld in existence by the presence of the Spirit, and which vanished from the constitution on the cessation of the Spirit's influence] "Only God's *withdrawing* as it was highly proper and necessary that he should from rebel man being as it were driven away by his abominable wickedness, and man's natural principles being *left to themselves*, this is sufficient to account for his becoming entirely *corrupt* and *bent* on sinning against God."—*His Works, vol.* 6. *p.* 428, 429, 430, 431.

Two or three remarks will show the conclusions to which this theory carries us respecting the nature of depravity.

1st. It teaches that the physical constitution of man suffered an important change at the fall, by the subtraction of a portion of the attributes denominated "superior principles," with which it was originally endowed. By these superior principles the author undoubtedly meant *physical attributes* of the mind; not mere *feelings* or *exercises*. What propriety can there be in interpreting the superior, more than the inferior principles, to denote actions? Do the latter, if used in that sense, mean unholy actions? But they are expressly declared to have been in man in innocence. Can he have meant to teach that man exercised unholy actions *in innocence*, or sinned before the fall? Or do they mean holy actions? Why then are they depicted as essentially different in their nature from the superior principles? as destined to an office wholly subordinate? And why are they not also represented as ceasing, like the other class, on the departure of the Spirit's influence? Or why is man declared—by being left with them alone—to have been "left in a state of darkness, woful corruption, and ruin?"

Besides, what is the propriety of the statement that human *nature* was not *annihilated* by the loss of those superior principles, if he only employed them to denote *actions?* if he neither believed—nor regarded himself as having conveyed an impression to his readers—that their loss had produced any *change* whatever in that nature? Or what, unless they were regarded as physical attributes, is the propriety of their being represented as *implanted* in man, as truly as were those which are inferior; and as constituting "the dignity, life, happiness, and glory" of his "*nature?*"

But that by those superior principles he meant physical attributes solely, and not mental operations, is demonstrated by his employing the *loss* of those principles to account for the fact, that man continued to sin after the fall, instead of yielding obedience as at first; which were supremely illogical, had he used the term to denote *actions*, instead of constitutional attributes. It were to make the *loss* of his *holy actions*—holy of course as they were exercised antecedently to the fall—the *cause* of his *ceasing to exercise holiness*, and yielding to the "predominance" of *unholy actions*—if the "inferior principles" mean such—as they must by the same rule of interpretation. The *loss* of his *holy actions*—that is, his *ceasing to exercise holiness*, the *cause* of his ceasing to exercise holiness! What is this but the grossest nonsense? To verify this representation, the reader is desired to substitute actions in place of principles in the quotation, and he will perceive the absurdity such an interpretation involves. But is this the manner in which the mind of Edwards considered an easy and satisfactory explanation as made out, of the rebellion of mankind? No one can for a moment imagine that such was his meaning. And if it was not, he must of course have employed the terms to denote physical attributes: as beside its operations, nothing but its physical properties belongs to the mind.

2d. The theory exhibits the *presence* of those principles

in the constitution of man, as necessary in order to his being *capable* of *exercising holiness*, and consequently represents their *extinction*, as rendering him *physically incapable* of *obedience*. This is seen from the description of them. They are represented as far more excellent in their nature, and destined to a much more exalted office than those of the inferior class, as constituting "the spiritual image of God" in the soul, and "the glory of man's nature," and as "given to possess the throne and maintain absolute dominion in the heart;" whilst the others were greatly inferior in their nature, and formed for a totally inferior office; "to be wholly subordinate and subservient." But what propriety is there in a delineation that throws their nature and destiny so wide asunder, if after all the inferior class approaches so near to the superior, that no physical obstacle hinders its ascending from its appropriate sphere, and performing the service for which the superior class was designed?

But all doubt that President Edwards regarded them as necessary, in order to render the constitution physically competent to act in conformity to the divine will, must be removed by the circumstance that he represents the *loss* of those superior principles, as the *sole cause* of the subsequent *disobedience* of mankind; a representation without propriety, unless their removal from the constitution was considered as having left it absolutely incapable of obedience. For if the surviving portion of nature were still physically adequate to obedience; if the inferior principles after fulfilling their own proper office, were competent to discharge the functions also of the higher class, it does not follow that the extinction of that higher class must infallibly have caused an universal violation of the divine requirements; nor that it actually did. If nature is still left as truly *capable* of yielding obedience as it was before, nothing surely so far as that only is concerned, is seen but that it as certainly *will* yield it. The certainty of its disobedience must be constituted by something *external* to itself;

namely, those objects which are to exert on it the influence under which it is to exercise its various capacities for action; or rather the moral influence itself under which it is to exert those capacities, and which are to determine the manner in which it acts.

Where then, to place the subject beyond controversy, did President Edwards regard the certainty, that man would sin, as *lying?* in the *nature* of the *constitution* with which he was left after the fall, or *out* of it? namely, in the moral influence, which was to be brought to bear on that nature, and under which it was to act? Indubitably *in* that *nature*, and *solely* within it. This is demonstrated indeed by his assigning the *state* in which it was left by the fall, as the *cause* of the universal rebellion of men. But beyond this, it was the *avowed* and *sole design* of his treatise on *original sin*, to *establish* that *position*. His language is, "All mankind are in such a state . . . that they universally run themselves . . . . into eternal perdition, ... from which I *infer* that the *natural state* of the *mind* of man is attended with a *propensity* of *nature* which is *prevalent* and *effectual* to *such an issue*." And "this tendency . . . . does not consist in any particular *external circumstances*, ... but is *inherent*, and is seated in that *nature* which is common to mankind, which they carry with them wherever they go."

Accordingly he devoted the whole work to the proof and vindication of that doctrine.

It was his belief, therefore, that it is the *nature* of man solely that is the cause of his sinning, and that constitutes the certainty that he will continue to sin. But as that cannot be inferred, unless it is assumed—virtually at least—that his nature is *physically incapable* of obedience, for if it is actually capable of it, it does not itself constitute a certainty that it will *not* obey; it presents no certainty that it will not *exert* that capacity;—it is the representation of his theory, that such a physical incapacity pertains to the constitution of man.

It appears then, according to this theory, that an important portion of the powers with which man was originally endowed, was stricken from his constitution at the fall; that in consequence of their eradication his nature was left physically incapable of acting in conformity to the divine will; and that it is this inability of nature to yield obedience; or in other words its total adaptation and tendency to sin, that constitutes that "sinful depravity" and "great corruption of nature" with which "man comes into the world."—*p.* 163, 164.

But this depravity is more commonly represented as consisting in a disposition, taste, relish, or propensity implanted in the soul, which is the cause of its liking or disliking the moral objects presented to its view; and the nature of which is such, that sin is supremely agreeable, and holiness supremely disagreeable to it; such, that all the moral influence of what kind or degree soever brought to bear on the mind, is rendered an excitement to sin; that which naturally tempts to evil by the gratification it affords; and that which is adapted to prompt to holiness by the aversion which it excites. A specimen of the manner in which this disposition is described is presented in the following quotations:

"Human *nature* must be *created* with some *dispositions*, or *disposition* to relish some things as good and amiable, and to be averse to other things as *odious* and *disagreeble;* otherwise it must be without any such thing as inclination or will. It must be perfectly indifferent, without preference, without choice or aversion towards any thing as agreeable or disagreeable. But if it had any *concreated dispositions* at all, they must be either *right* or *wrong*, either agreeable or disagreeable to the nature of things. If man had at first the highest relish of those things that were most excellent and beautiful, a disposition to have the quickest and highest delight in those things that were most worthy of it, then

his dispositions were *morally right* and *amiable*, and never can be decent and excellent in a higher sense. But if he had a disposition to love most those things that were inferior and less worthy, then his dispositions were vicious. And it is evident there can be no medium between these." —*Edwards' Works, vol.* 6. *p.* 267, 268.

" If you mean by disposition, a taste or principle that is the *foundation* of exercises,"—and it is that use of the term to which this discussion relates,—" then it is evident that an object to be beloved must be adapted to the *existing* disposition. Of course it had no influence to *produce* it. If you admit the existence of a taste or principle, and call the object the motive which moves the heart to action, you will readily allow that the object must be accommodated to the taste *before* it can become a motive; that is, before it can be beloved. It must find the disposition prepared to entertain it before it can move the heart. A hated object can never be a motive to love; and a beloved object finds the taste already in its favour. The power of the object to become a motive *presupposes* a disposition in the heart to love it. Of course it did not *produce* that disposition even as a second cause....The word of God is in no sense instrumental in *changing the disposition*. It is enough to ask how can the motives of religion be the instruments of producing a new disposition, when that disposition must *exist* before the motives can take hold of the heart?"—*Park-Street Lectures*, *p.* 153, 154. 157.

But is this disposition a *physical* property? What else can it be? It is not a volition. It is not a feeling or exercise. It is not any mental operation whatever, nor an effect, nor in any manner a consequence of any such operation; for it exists, and must according to the representation, *before* any moral feeling or volition can take place in the mind; is the *foundation* of all such exercises, and determines their moral

nature. But that is to give it being at a period when nothing beside its physical properties belongs to the soul. Trace the mind up to the moment antecedent to its *first* exercise, and can any thing be seen or conceived then to belong to it except its mere substantial nature? If then this disposition is predicable of it at that period, it must be exclusively as a physical attribute.

VI. In accordance with these views, mankind are represented as totally unable to exercise holiness, or avoid the commission of sin.

In reply to the charge that the divine requirements can be no better than mockery, unless a compliance with them lies within our power, Calvin employs the following language:

"It has indeed long been a common opinion that the faculties of men are co-extensive with the requirements of the divine law, and it has some speciousness, but it proceeds from a total want of acquaintance with the law. For those who regard it an egregious crime to say that the observance of the law is impossible, insist—as though it were an invincible argument—that were that the case, the law was given in vain. They talk just as though Paul had never said any thing about the law. For what to them I pray can [these passages] mean? "The law was added because of transgressions;"—"by the law is the knowledge of sin;"—"is the law sin?"—"the law entered that the offence might abound?" That [the law] is limited to our strength, lest it should be given in vain? Indeed, instead of that, it was made far *above* us, in order that it might produce a conviction of our *impotence*." "If there had been only a mere requirement, without any promise, a trial would have been made whether our powers are sufficient to meet the demand. But since promises are connected with it, which proclaim, not only that aid, but that our whole strength lies in the assistance of divine grace; they show sufficiently, and more than

sufficiently, that we are absolutely unadapted,—not to say incompetent to the observance of the law." "I deny that God cruelly mocks us when he invites us, knowing that we are totally impotent to qualify ourselves for his blessing." And quoting from Augustine—"God requires what we cannot perform, in order that we may know what we ought to seek from him."—*Inst.* Lib. II. Cap. V. 6, 7. 10.

The resolutions of the divines at Dort on this subject, are thus expressed:

"All men are conceived in sin, and are born the children of wrath, unfit for every good connected with salvation, prone to evil, dead in sin, and the servants of sin; and without the Holy Spirit regenerating them, they neither will nor *can* return to God, amend their depraved nature, nor dispose themselves for its amendment."—*Buck's Theol. Dict.* Vol. I. p. 110.

The Westminster divines employed the following language:

"Man by his fall into a state of sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is *not able* by his *own strength* to *convert himself*, or to *prepare* himself thereunto."

The language of the Catechism of the Reformed Dutch Church is,

"Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly *incapable* of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness? *Indeed we are*, except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. Doth not God then do injustice to man by requiring from him in his law that which he *cannot* perform? *Not at all.* For

God *made* man *capable* of performing it; but man, by the instigation of the devil and his own wilful disobedience, *deprived himself* and all his *posterity* of those divine gifts."

"I shall endeavour to make it evident that such is the *corruption of human nature* derived from Adam, and such man's *disability* contracted by it, that without the special grace of God, he *can do nothing spiritually good*, and *only that which is evil*."—*Gill's Cause of God and Truth*, 2d Vol. p. 260.

"*All capacity* of delighting in the holy services and spiritual worship of God is *extinct in every descendant of Adam*, till the spirit of life in Christ Jesus restores divine life to the soul by regeneration."—*Scott's Notes on Genesis* III.

The following quotation from Smalley's sermon on moral inability, expresses an opinion, openly avowed by many, and furnishes a specimen of the language which is often heard on the subject:

"Some account for God's suspending our salvation upon impossible conditions, and condemning men for not doing what it is not in their power to do, by observing that we *lost our power* by the *fall*. Our present weakness and blindness was brought upon us as a righteous punishment for the disobedience of Adam; and God, they say, has not lost his right to command, because man by his own folly and sin, has lost his ability to obey."

These declarations are made expressly in relation to the physical constitution of man. And can any one fail to see that those who penned, and those who have adopted them, inculcate the existence of a physical depravity? They explicitly affirm that men are totally destitute of *power* to yield obedience to the divine will. Of course that *want of power* is the *sole cause* of their disobedience. There is no

room for the intervention of a *moral* cause, when nothing whatever depends on the *will*. But what is that, but in the most absolute manner to make a defect in their physical constitution the cause of their disobedience ?

To confine the remark to the authors of these quotations. No one surely can doubt from these and other passages presented from their works, that they regarded this *depravity* as the cause of every sin which mankind commit. They represent all sin as being produced by it. But they here expressly declare that the nature of their *physical constitution* is such, that it is *impossible* for them to pursue the course which God has prescribed to them in his law; or to make any approximation toward it. What is this but making the *nature* of that *constitution* the *cause* of all their sins ? that is, making it that very *depravity* to which the production of their sins was before ascribed. And are not these remarks equally applicable to all who employ similar language on the subject ?

VII. As an obvious result from these views, it is held that no kind whatever nor degree of moral influence that can be brought to bear upon mankind, can lead them, or have any tendency to lead them to exercise holiness.

" If man is dead in the moral sense, that is, has lost all principles of true virtue entirely, he is as absolutely beyond the reach of all means as to their bringing him to life again, as one that is dead in the natural sense. Moral means can only work upon such moral principles as they find to work upon. They cannot produce a new *nature*, new *principles* of action, any more than natural means can make new life for themselves to work upon in a dead carcase. Cultivation and manuring may make a bad tree grow and bear fruit after its kind, but can never make a thorn bear figs, or a bramble bush grapes. Let what means will be used, so long as the tree is evil, the fruit will be so likewise. If

mankind have lost the moral image of God entirely, it is easy to see that nothing short of a *new creation* can restore it to them. If they are dead in trespasses and sins, the quickening them must be an instance of the working of God's mighty power in a supernatural manner, like that of raising Christ from the dead. And without a work of this kind, whatever means are used with them, they will never have the least spiritual life or real holiness."—*Smalley's Sermon on Natural Ability.*

This doctrine is exhibited in still bolder relief, and inculcated with greater plausibility and energy, in the language and reasonings commonly employed respecting the "old disposition." The statements and arguments in regard to it not only represent it as utterly impossible that any species or degree of moral influence should excite men to the exercise of holiness; but as totally impossible that it should not produce precisely the opposite effect. Some passages expressing these views have already been quoted. The following may be added.

"But if the heart of sinners is depraved, if they hate the true character of God in whatever form it appears, they will *hate* it the *more* the more it is *seen*, and light so far from abating will only rouse the enmity to stronger action....But motives have no influence to produce a new disposition in either sense of that word—least of all can they produce that heavenly temper which is wrought in Regeneration.....But if the carnal mind is hostile to the true God, it will *hate* him the more the *more* he is *seen;* and light (as at the Last Day) will only *rouse* the enmity to *stronger* action. To use light then as an instrument to cure the disposition, is like using oil to extinguish fire."—*Park-Street Lectures, p.* 118. 156, 157.

This is undoubtedly good reasoning, if the obstacle to be overcome is purely physical; but not otherwise. It proceeds entirely on the ground that this disposition is such, that a moral influence, from its *nature*, is not at all adapted to remove it. It is for that reason that it is believed no agency of motives which can be brought to bear on the voluntary powers, no matter to what extent it is carried, nor what modification it assumes, can have any tendency to subvert it. But what is that but a complete definition of a merely physical attribute? What more can be said of any property, over the existence of which the will can exert no influence, and has no jurisdiction? If a moral influence, from its very nature, is wholly unadapted to change this disposition; if from its nature a physical agency is necessary to accomplish a change in it; must it not be solely because it is a merely physical property?

But to try the question more closely. It will be admitted, that the cause that no moral influence can change the disposition, is either a want of adaptation in the *nature* of that influence to produce the change; or else a deficiency in its *degree*. But those who hold the doctrine in question, do not allow that it is the latter: They expressly teach, that advance it to any degree of strength whatever within the compass of possibility, and still it cannot excite men to the exercise of holiness, nor make any approximation toward it; nor even fail of producing directly the opposite effect. But if it is the former, then the ground of that want of adaptation must be, that the disposition is a physical, instead of a moral attribute, and therefore requires a physical agency to effect any change in it.

Or in other words: the cause that no moral influence can produce a change of the disposition is, either that the structure of the mind is such, that it is destitute of a *physical capacity* for that class of volitions which is morally excellent, and *therefore* a moral influence has no adaptation to produce such volitions in it, any more than it has in brutes, or any

thing else totally incapable of them;—and will the friends of the doctrine in question admit that? it is precisely what they are regarded as teaching:—or else the mind *has* all the physical capacity requisite for the exercise of such volitions; and the cause that it cannot be *made* to exercise them, is simply, *an impossibility of bringing such a degree* of moral influence to bear on it, as is necessary to lead it to exert that capacity. A capacity lodged in the mind of man, which it is absolutely impossible should ever be brought into *exercise!* How then is its existence *proved?* Who can discover the existence of what can never be made to develop itself? God has endowed every one of his moral creatures in this world with a capacity which, with all his infinite resources of contrivance and execution, he can never in a single instance bring into *exertion!* Has God then given powers which are beyond his control? What is this capacity? The self-determining power of the will, which the friends of the subject in question have so often employed themselves in annihilating? But no one surely will feel inclined to adopt this side of the alternative. It can never be believed that God has communicated powers which he is utterly incapable of bringing into exercise. It must then be admitted that if such an attribute as the disposition in question exists in the human mind, its nature must be purely physical.

VIII. If a moral influence is thus entirely unadapted to lead men to the exercise of holiness, it follows, as an obvious consequence, that the renovation of the heart is caused by a purely physical agency, and is itself nothing more than a physical effect. Accordingly it is taught as a part of the system under consideration, that the regenerating agency of the Divine Spirit is solely of that kind, and is employed solely in producing a physical change.

"The divine operation in regeneration of which the new heart is the effect, is immediate; or it is not wrought by any means as the cause of it; but by the immediate power and

energy of the Holy Spirit. It is called a creation; and the divine agency in it is as much without any medium, as in creating something from nothing. Men are not regenerated in the sense in which we are now considering regeneration by light, or by the word of God. . . . . That operation which changes the evil eye to a single eye cannot be by means of light, but must take place antecedent to any light, or any influence or effect that can be produced by it."—*Hopkins' System of Divinity*, Vol. 1. p. 536.

"The Calvinist tells you that the heart is so depraved that it will not improve divine influence till it is changed; that it stubbornly resists all light and motives till it is *forced* to submit; that the moral Ruler has as much occasion to subdue it by *strength*, as an earthly king to quell by *force* his rebellious subjects; and that the simple history of the change is, that God *makes* his people willing in the day of his *power*.....The decisive question is, was the power [by which regeneration was produced] applied to the *motives* to open a passage for themselves—or to the *heart* to open a passage for them? Let the event declare; the heart was new before the motives entered. As then the change in question is effected neither by mechanical causes, nor by the influence of motives, it is not brought about by any of the laws of nature, and of course is supernatural. An effect may be supernatural which is produced by a second cause, if that cause is *above nature*, for instance an angel; but the one under consideration is not only supernatural, but *immediate;* or if not altogether immediate because there was such an antecedent as the presentation of motives, yet immediate in the sense in which those effects were which followed the extension of Moses' rod, the blast of trumpets before the walls of Jericho, the voice of Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones, the application of clay to the eyes of the blind man, &c. In all these cases the antecedent had no such influence as belongs to a second cause in nature,

for instance to fire as the agent in consuming a building; but every body sees that the power was as immediately exerted as though no antecedent had taken place. In the *same sense* the *power* which changes the *heart* is *immediate*, acting through *no second cause;* producing its effect by no *instrument*.....Regeneration is the *formation of the eye*, but light is necessary to actual vision."—*Park-Street Lectures*, *p.* 144, 145. 158, 159. 176.

The reader perceives these passages deny that the Spirit of God employs a moral influence, or any means whatever in regenerating the mind, and represent the change as accomplished solely and directly by the divine energy—by an immediate act of Almighty power on the soul; and therefore by an agency in the strictest sense physical.

But is the *change* produced merely a physical effect? Unquestionably. Why is a physical agency employed, unless the effect to be produced is solely of the same nature? The regenerating influence must be employed either in effecting a change in the physical constitution, or else simply in exciting the soul to an exertion of the attributes with which it was before endowed. If it is only the latter, why is the immediate act of the Divine Spirit, instead of second causes, necessary to accomplish it? Are there no second causes in existence, or can none be created, which can be brought to act on the mind in such a manner, as to lead it to exert all its attributes?—to exhibit every capacity of its nature?

But to subject the question to a more thorough ordeal. It must be admitted that the agency of the Divine Spirit in regeneration is employed either in effecting a *change* in the *physical constitution*, or else in simply producing an *act* or *operation* of the constitution which before existed. But the theory under consideration explicitly denies that it is employed in producing the latter. It represents the effect produced as being a "new disposition," which is "*the foundation*" of the "exercises" of the mind,

and necessarily exists *antecedently* to the exercise of any holy act. The language of the Park-Street Lectures—and it undoubtedly expresses the views generally held on the subject—is, "Though the Word of God in the shape of motives has an important use in *occasioning the exercises* of the *new* heart, it is in no sense instrumental in *changing the disposition*." It must be acknowledged that we can see no instrumentality in truth to create, or increase, or continue the *new* disposition. In the regulation of that *power* truth has none of the influence of a *second cause*.....It may then be asked, why should a second cause intervene, which has no influence? If divine power produces the whole effect, why couple itself with a powerless cause? These questions would be unanswerable if there was nothing to be done but to create and continue, and increase the new *disposition;* but there are *views* and *affections* and *acts* of the *will* and *motions* of the *body* to be produced, or *the disposition* is utterly *useless*. In the production of *all these*, both in their beginning and in all the degrees of their increase, truth, when it finds the disposition favourable, *has* the proper influence of a second cause."...." At the time of conversion" [which is represented as a consequence of regeneration] "the truths of the word are the instruments of producing all the *thoughts* which fill the *understanding*, all the *motions* of the *heart*, the *will* and the *body;* and are the instruments therefore of producing the whole of that *turning* which the term imports."—*p.* 156. 172. 175.

The most specific and palpable distinction is thus made between the *new disposition*, which is represented as *the effect* produced by the regenerating influence; and *all the holy exercises* of the mind of what kind soever they are.—The former exists antecedently to the latter, and is the source or "*power*" from which they spring, and is caused by the immediate act of the Divine Spirit, without the co-operation of any means:—whilst "the truths of the word

are the instruments of producing the whole" of the latter, whether they are "thoughts of the understanding," or "motions of the heart, the will or the body." . . And it is this distinction between the new disposition, and all holy exercises, which the ordinary use of the terms regeneration and conversion denotes; the former being employed to designate the effect produced by the regenerating influence; and the latter the first holy exercises which take place in the mind, and which are considered as the consequences of regeneration. As then, according to this representation, the agency of the Divine Spirit in regeneration does not produce any *operation* of mind whatever, it remains that it must be employed simply in producing a *change* in the *physical constitution.*

That such is the doctrine of the theory under consideration, is to be inferred moreover from the views it exhibits of the nature of depravity. As depravity is represented as consisting in a physical incapacity for holiness—regeneration, by which the mind is fitted for the exercise of holy actions, will of course be exhibited as consisting in such a change of the physical constitution as makes it capable of holiness.

Such are some of the modes in which, it is believed, the doctrine of a physical depravity is taught. It is now time to pause, and cast the eye back over the ground which has been traversed, and collect the result. It has been seen that the depravity of mankind is represented as an attribute of nature, in distinction from actions; as existing in the mind antecedently to its exercising any actions; and as being the cause that all its moral exercises are sinful,—as being conveyed from parents to children by propagation, in the same manner as other constitutional properties; as consisting in a want of adaptation in the powers of the soul to that class of exercises which are morally excellent; and consequently, as being such, that it renders men utterly incapable of holiness; such that no moral influence has any power or ten-

dency to lead them to it; and finally such, that it is by producing a change in their physical constitution, that the Spirit of God fits them for acting in conformity to the divine will. What then is the result? Can any doubt remain that those who make these representations, inculcate the existence of a *physical* depravity? Can it be, after all this, that the idea that such a doctrine is taught is a mere illusion?—a gratuitous freak of the imagination? What can be required to make out a demonstration that such a doctrine is inculcated? Declarations,—which according to the just meaning of language *must* denote such a doctrine? The passages quoted contain an abundance of such. Formal definitions—which if any regard is had to the proper force of their terms, to the great principles on which they rest, or to the results which they authorize, *cut off the possibility* of their involving any other meaning? The reader has been presented with a multiplicity of such. Arguments,—whose whole *force* and *propriety* depend on the *existence* of such a depravity? Such is the character of the great mass of the reasoning which has been employed on the subject by the theological world, for nearly three hundred years, to say nothing of what prevailed antecedently. What farther evidence can be necessary?

Is it said? "But those who make these representations,—and it was true also of their predecessors,—hold and inculcate doctrines totally inconsistent with and subversive of this." Admitted. Such doctrines are indeed scattered thickly over the pages of their works, and form a conspicuous feature of their creed; and thanks be to God for it—they are the redeeming principle of their system, and what has drawn down the blessing of heaven on their ministry, and made it the instrument of so much good to the world. But the question is not at all, whether they do not believe and teach other doctrines subversive of this; but whether they do not inculcate *this* doctrine, whether the passages which have

been quoted, by the just principles of interpretation do not necessarily, not to say exclusively, involve it; whether it does not constitute the very substance and soul of their common declarations, statements, and reasonings respecting the subject? If such is the character of their arguments, definitions and language, the thing attempted to be made out is demonstrated. Their believing and teaching other doctrines inconsistent with this, no more proves that they do not inculcate this, than their inculcating this proves that they do not teach any thing contradictory to it. The sole thing in controversy is, what is the proper meaning of their language on the subject? what are the results to which their definitions, and the great principles on which their reasoning depends inevitably carry us? And can any one doubt what those results are?

But is it said? "Those who are regarded as inculcating the doctrine in question, do not view their system as authorizing the conclusions which that doctrine involves." Grant that it is so. Does it thence follow that it does not authorize those conclusions? Do men never hold and teach doctrines fraught,—without their perceiving it—with the subversion of many other important points of their belief? Do they never reason upon principles, which, if followed up legitimately, would force them to results from which they would recoil with surprise and alarm? But if those whom this controversy implicates do not perceive, that according to their method of exhibiting the depravity of man, it is a physical attribute; do they see that it certainly is *not? see* and *feel* with that calm and complete conviction which the light of *demonstration* produces, that the doctrine as they treat it *cannot* involve any thing of that nature? and that it adjusts itself entirely to all the other articles of their faith? How then is it that when called on to vindicate their representations, they so often content themselves with the reply? "We do not pretend to *reason* on the subject. We find the doctrine which we teach in the scriptures, and know therefore that it is true." Such is un-

doubtedly their belief; but the inquiry is—Is not the consistency of their views with the word of God. an object *simply* of *belief*, not of *perception*; a thing taken for granted —not ascertained?

But is it said? "Be it so that the depravity of mankind is virtually exhibited as a physical attribute—still the error is not inculcated in such a manner as to be extensively imbibed, and productive of any very considerable evil. Its injurious tendency is intercepted by the truth with which it is intermingled." Is it so, then, that truth commands the conviction and approbation of men so much more readily than error? and even that truth which is most adapted to humble and alarm them, and which comes to them under the disadvantages of a virtual denial by their religious instructors—more readily than errors which are inculcated as doctrines of revelation, and are adapted to release them from the ungrateful feelings of blame and obligation? But what are facts? If the truths taught in connection with the doctrine in question entirely intercept the injurious influence it is adapted to exert, how is it that among those on whom it is inculcated, so many are found who have a variety of views and impressions which directly involve this doctrine? Whence is it, that—the testimony of their consciousness notwithstanding—the opinion has found its way into the creeds of so many myriads, that mankind are in every sense absolutely unable to yield any obedience to the law of God? Whence is it, that in certain sections of the church so much displeasure and denunciation have been excited, when it has been taught, that men *can* exercise holiness? that so far as capacity is concerned no obstacle to it whatever exists? Whence is it, that when the doctrine is advanced, that as it regards their physical constitution, mankind are not depraved, corrupted, nor infected with any thing that renders them obnoxious to the divine disapprobation, it is viewed as contradicting and subverting the doctrine of the scriptures respecting the *character* of men?

From what cause is it so common a fact, that persons during the period of inquiry and conviction which precedes their renovation, are perplexed to reconcile their obligations to comply with the Gospel, with their need of the regenerating influence of the Divine Spirit? And how comes it to pass, that among the perceptions which flash upon their eye in that decisive moment when they catch the first glimpse of God in his true character, and the feeling spreads over them that he is righteous, and they are vile;—one of the most prominent is, that they *are*, and always *have been perfectly able* to act in conformity to the divine will? Is it irrational to regard these and other facts of a kindred nature, as the consequences of the inculcation of the doctrine in question? Are they not the effects which might be anticipated from the doctrine? Are they not known to exist very extensively, and to be productive, in at least many instances, of highly injurious—not to say the most fatal consequences? But the unhappy influence with which the inculcation of the doctrine must be fraught, will be made more satisfactorily apparent by glancing at some of the considerations which show it to be untrue.

PART SECOND.

Proofs that the Doctrine is Erroneous.

It may perhaps seem scarcely necessary to agitate the question, whether the reasonings employed to sustain these views of the depravity of mankind, are valid and satisfactory; or to present a formal array of argument to show the erroneousness of the views themselves? It is believed, however, the discussion will not be without interest nor utility: not only from the conclusions to which it will lead in regard to the nature of those reasonings, and from the stronger light in which it will place the impropriety and injurious tendency of inculcating the doctrine; but also from its bearings on the views which are to be presented at the close of the work.

I. The great argument employed to sustain the doctrine is founded on the *sinful actions* of mankind. But their uniting in a course of transgression to the extent to which they do, does not demonstrate the existence of any defect in their physical constitution rendering them incapable of obedience. The existence of such a defect cannot be inferred from their conduct, at any rate, unless their actions are *universally* disobedient. But it is admitted that multitudes, beyond computation—namely, all who are renewed by the Spirit of God—do, in innumerable instances, act in conformity to the divine will. Unless, therefore, it is first proved, that the Spirit of God has wrought a *change* in the *physical*

constitutions of all those who ever act obediently, which is the *cause* of the change in their *conduct*—their uniting in transgression to such an extent as they do, no more proves the universal existence of such a defect in their physical nature, than their uniting in obedience to such an extent as they do, demonstrates their universal exemption from such a defect. But has it ever been proved that such a change is actually wrought in the constitutions of those who are renewed? *Can* it be proved? do the Scriptures intimate any thing of that nature? Is there any thing in the consciousness of God's children demonstrating it? Is there a single fact within the compass of human knowledge from which it can be legitimately inferred? But if no evidence whatever exists that such a change is ever effected, what proof is furnished by the disobedience of mankind, that their nature universally, while unrenewed, is totally incapable—from a physical defect—of acting in conformity to the divine will? What evidence appears, but that they have precisely the same capacity for obedience, antecedently to regeneration, as afterwards; but that the capacity which they exert in violating the law of God, is identically that which they exert in acting in conformity to it? Unless, therefore, it is first demonstrated, that that portion of the actions of mankind which are obedient is not exercised by a physical nature of the same kind as that which exerts those actions which are disobedient; it is *assuming* the thing to be proved, to allege the disobedience of men, as demonstrative evidence that the nature of man universally, while unrenewed, is physically incapable of exercising holiness.

But the principle on which the argument proceeds carries us farther. Until it is proved that a change is wrought in the constitution of all those who ever yield any obedience, we are not only not authorized to infer from the disobedience of men, that their physical nature is infected with a depravity, which renders them incapable of holiness; or which is the same thing, which is the cause of their disobedience;

but we are bound by all the laws of just philosophy, *not* to *make* such an inference. Why should we infer the existence of a thing of which not a particle of evidence is perceived? We cast our eye over the great family of man, and see that of the endless multiplicity of actions which they every hour exert, one portion are violations of the law of God, and the other compliances with it. Now, there not being a shred of proof discerned within the sphere of human knowledge, but that the physical constitution of those who transgress the divine law, is precisely like theirs who act in conformity to it,—but that theirs who have been regenerated, is identically such as it was antecedently to their regeneration,—are we not imperatively required by every legitimate rule of philosophizing, to regard the constitutions of all, as *being*—so far as this subject is concerned—*entirely alike?* In other words—to esteem that as being truly the fact, which we have no reason whatever to doubt is such? and therefore entirely to reject the doctrine that it is owing to the peculiar structure of their physical nature that mankind sin? If not—if even on those subjects which most intimately concern our well-being—we are authorized to give the rein to fancy, and pronounce things to be true or otherwise as caprice happens to dictate, without a shadow of evidence to sustain us—there is surely an end to all reasoning, and the distinctions between right and wrong, which have been imagined to be immutable, are annihilated.

The result of the whole then is, that the great argument from the *sinful actions* of men, to prove the existence of a *corruption of their nature*,—a physical depravity, which is the cause of those sinful actions, assumes the thing to be established, and is wholly without force.

II. A subordinate or auxiliary argument to sustain the doctrine, is founded on the connection between the first transgression of Adam, and the disobedience of men. But this is obviously dependent entirely for its propriety on the correctness of the former, and fails with that. For if the

unholy actions themselves of mankind do not demonstrate nor present any evidence that they are physically depraved, the fact that their *exercising* those actions is a *consequence* of the *fall*, surely cannot. If the *manner itself* in which they *act*, furnishes nothing to sustain the doctrine, will any one imagine the mere *occasion* of their acting in that manner can present any thing for its support?

It is believed the reader must be satisfied, that no proof is furnished by the *actions* of men, that their physical constitutions are depraved. Let their actions then be thrown from the view, as having no connection with the question; and whence can it then be proved, that in consequence of Adam's fall, all his posterity have derived from him a physical depravity? Can any one *see* that such a depravity pertains to the human constitution? But who knows any thing of the nature of the mind, but from the manner in which it acts? which has now nothing to do with the inquiry. Does the volume of Revelation teach the existence of such a depravity? Where? But this question demands a seperate consideration.

III. Another auxiliary argument is founded on the declarations of the sacred volume respecting men. Of these there are two classes. One which represents men as *transgressing* the divine *law*. This is easily disposed of; for if the unholy actions themselves of men are no evidence that they are physically depraved, those passages of Scripture which merely represent them as *exercising* those actions, of course are not. The other class consists of such as the following: "No man *can* come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The decision in regard to this is equally at hand. It will be admitted that the true meaning of these passages is such, that the Most High treats mankind in them in a manner entirely consistent with that in which he treats them in other parts of his word. How then does he treat them in other parts of his word? as though a defect existed in their physical constitutions by

which they are rendered totally incapable of exercising any of those actions which his law prescribes? Is that the manner in which he treats them in requiring them to exert those actions?—in pronouncing them supremely guilty?—in expressing the most awful indignation at them?—in threatening to inflict on them the most appalling punishment for not complying with his requirements? Will any one from these passages venture to affirm that he does not, in his moral administration at large, conduct toward mankind as being precisely such creatures as they *are?* that he has instituted a system of legislation over them which has no more adaptation to their nature than it has to that of brutes and inanimate objects? But let the Spirit of truth decide the inquiry. "It is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." But if this is the great principle on which the Most High proceeds in the imposition of laws, it is manifest that mankind possess all the powers necessary to the performance of every action he requires them to exercise. As then the Most High in all the measures of his administration proceeds on the ground that mankind possess all those powers, it cannot be that in the passages to which this argument relates, he treats them as though entirely destitute of them. What then is the meaning of those passages? Certainly not that men are *physically unable* to exercise holiness; but simply that they *do not choose to.*

It may be added, moreover, as none can have failed to observe, nor to hear offered in explanation of these passages, that the use here ascribed to the terms to which the discussion relates, is common in regard to other subjects, and is understood with as little difficulty as when they are employed with any other meaning.

These arguments, it is believed, involve all which are ever employed to support the doctrine under consideration; and they, the reader perceives, are but different forms of

one, founded on the sinful actions of men. Having seen that the doctrine has never been proved to be true; it is time to proceed to some of the considerations which show it to be erroneous.

IV. It is contradicted by the testimony of conscience. The mind is so formed, that it never feels blame for not acting in a manner in which it is conscious it has no power to act. That feeling never springs up in it, except for actions which it has a conviction it was able to avoid. Do the blind ever feel blame for not seeing? Is it not absolutely impossible that they should? and that any others should in analagous circumstances? The great principle then on which all the operations of conscience proceed is, that—so far as this discussion is concerned—*capacity* is the *foundation* and *measure* of *obligation;* that a being is guilty for violating a law,—so far as this question goes—simply because he was able to *avoid* its violation. Reader, suppose in order to convince you of the fact, the Most High were to require you to create a material object. You violate the command. Why? I have not the requisite power, you reply, to comply with it. But you are to blame. Not at all, you answer. What is the reason? Because I am not *able* to create such an object. I revere my Creator, and desire to do his will, but this act is totally beyond the sphere of my capacity: Is there a being who does not see that my decision is right? But look at the *reason* that you feel perfectly blameless. It is simply because the act lies above your power. Let the requisite power be thrown into your constitution, and you will instantly feel to blame for not exercising it. The result then is, God has formed the minds of men in such a manner, that they cannot feel to blame for not doing any thing but what they are conscious they are able to do.

What now is the bearing of this great fact on the subject in controversy? On the one hand, it is indisputable that mankind do—at least in innumerable instances—feel guilty

for not obeying the law of God. It is demonstrated, therefore, that they are perfectly conscious—whatever their creed may be—of being *able* to obey it. On the other hand, the doctrine in question teaches, that from a defect in their physical constitution, they are absolutely *unable* to exercise a single act which the law of God requires. Whose testimony then is to be regarded as true? That conscience decides as it does, is the work of *God*. Are its decisions erroneous? Has God formed the mind in such a manner that it *cannot* feel to blame when it *ought?* that it *necessarily* exculpates when it should condemn itself? that its decisions therefore must inevitably be inconsistent with the divine rights? Are those to whom this controversy relates prepared to adopt such conclusions? If not—if what the human mind proceeds upon, in all its feelings of blame, be a fact—that men are completely able to act in compliance with all the requirements of the divine law; then it follows that the doctrine of a physical depravity, which represents them as wholly incapable of obedience, is entirely erroneous.

V. It is contradicted by the manner in which the Most High conducts toward mankind in his moral administration. This topic has already been partially considered; but it is worthy of farther attention.

It will be admitted, that God conducts toward mankind as being precisely such creatures as they are. If not, where is his justice or wisdom? Is there any wisdom or justice in treating beings as though they were essentially different from what they are? Is there any goodness or rectitude in imposing laws on brutes which are adapted only to men? or on men, which are adapted only to the energies of archangels? God, then, who is infinitely benevolent, just, and wise, treats all mankind, as being in regard to their physical nature, precisely such as they are. How then does he conduct toward them in his moral government? As though they were absolutely destitute of all ca-

pacity whatever for acting in conformity to his requirements? as though they were under no obligation to yield him any obedience? as though they stood, and must forever stand exculpated from all blame for not complying with the injunctions of his law. No answer surely can be necessary to these inquiries. Inasmuch then as mankind are treated by the Most High in the requirements and sanctions of his moral government, as though they possessed all the power requisite for the course of action which his law prescribes; they do in fact possess that power. The doctrine in question, therefore, which denies it to them, is erroneous.

VI. If the doctrine in controversy were true, it would lead to the most appalling conclusions in regard to the divine administration. This topic is partially involved in the two preceding arguments, but demands a remark or two more.

If such a depravity as the doctrine describes, exists in the minds of men, their violations of the law of God are of course unavoidable. They are events over which their wills have no preventive control. Their constitutions are incapable of any other moral action than that which is a transgression of the divine law. They cannot escape sinning, but by ceasing to act. But if such is the state of things, what conclusions are to be formed in regard to the divine government? Is it indeed totally unadapted to the nature of man? employed in endeavouring to elicit from him a course of action of which he is utterly incapable? Are its penal sanctions unrighteous? and their infliction in this world and the next undeserved? In short, is it neither characterized by grace, wisdom, nor even justice? Those whom the discussion implicates, will undoubtedly recoil from such results, with as much energy as others. They must then pronounce the doctrine they inculcate to be erroneous.

VII. If the doctrine were true, and the reasonings employed to sustain it sound, they would lead us to expect that men, on being regenerated, would exercise uninterrupted

obedience to the divine will. The doctrine represents the cause of their disobedience antecedently to renovation, as lying entirely within themselves; and consisting in such a structure of their nature—denominated "a depraved disposition," that every motive brought to bear on them must infallibly propel them to sin,—that they are physically incapable of any other species of action under a moral influence than that which violates the law. Of course, when regeneration takes place, that defect is removed from their constitution, and its place supplied by a "new disposition" precisely opposite in its nature. How happens it then that after this, they do not uninterruptedly exercise holiness? If the reasonings in regard to the old and new disposition are correct, there can no longer exist any foundation in their constitutions for unholy affections;—nothing on which motives can act as incentives to sin,—every species of moral influence brought to bear on them must infallibly lead them to the exercise of holiness. They in short become physically incapable of any other kind of action. But are they so in fact? Are modern believers perfectly holy? Were the Reformers? Was Peter or David? If not, the doctrine which goes to represent them as such cannot be correct.

VIII. On the whole then it appears, not only that the depravity in question does not pertain to the human constitution, but that it cannot. It is impossible to conceive of man's being capable of sinning, without his being at the same time equally capable of obedience. To sin is to violate an obligation; but as has been shown—no obligation to obey a law can exist, any farther than the capacity necessary to a compliance with its injunctions is possessed.

But perhaps even those whom the discussion most intimately concerns, will regard it as unnecessary—admitting that they have in fact inculcated the doctrine in question—to employ a formal array of reasoning to prove it to be erroneous;—will claim that they cannot—at least as a body—be imagined to have held it—discerning all the results to

which it is adapted to carry them;—that when separated from the contradictory points of beliefwith which it has been associated, and from the plausible but erroneous reasonings under which it has lurked, and which have shrouded much of its real character, and thrown over it the aspect of truth;—when disentangled from this factitious drapery, and presented in all the inherent and revolting deformity with which it is truly fraught,—they reject it with as much energy of feeling as others can. The conviction is cherished that such is undoubtedly the fact; and it yields high satisfaction, both from the favourable light in which it places their views in inculcating the doctrine, and from the pledge it gives that they are prepared to go along entirely in the adoption of the conclusions which are now to be drawn, and which result from what has been established.

PART THIRD.

Scriptural Views respecting the Nature, Condition, and Character of Mankind as Moral Agents.

I. There is nothing in the constitution of man on his coming into being, or at any subsequent period, which of itself—every thing else being thrown out of consideration—lays any foundation of a certainty what kind of actions he will exercise when placed under a moral influence: nothing from which it can be infallibly inferred that he will exercise sin instead of holiness, or holiness instead of sin; nor which can even present any more probability of his assuming the one character than the other.

This results from his having precisely the same *capacity* for exercising the one species of actions, as the other. Possessing identically the same capacity for obedience as for transgression, can any one imagine that by simply looking at his capacity, any certainty or probability can be discerned of his exercising the one, rather than the other? Can a given capacity for sin constitute any certainty or probability that sin will be exercised any more than precisely the same capacity for holiness forms a certainty or probability that holiness will be exercised?

Or to approach the point through a different avenue. No depravity, corruption, taint, nor any other defect what-

ever of that nature, pertains to the constitution of man, rendering him physically incapable of acting in conformity to the divine will, or making his committing sin in any sense an infallible result. Nothing whatever exists in it therefore which must by a necessity of its nature prove a *cause* of sin; nothing then which *of course* operates to the production of sin; nothing therefore which constitutes a *tendency* to sin; nothing then, in short, which forms any more *certainty* or *probability* that he will exercise that species of actions which is *evil*, than that which is morally *excellent*.

If any thing pertained to his constitution which of itself —every thing else being excluded from consideration— formed a proper ground for the conclusion that he would sin, instead of yielding obedience, it would constitute precisely the defect which the doctrine that has been discussed ascribes to him; and carry along with it all the revolting conclusions which that doctrine goes to authorize.

But this the reader perceives, is after all, nothing more than the question in regard to the capacity of man. The medium through which such a defect would operate to prevent his exercising holiness, must of course be that of incapacitating him for that species of action. If it left him with precisely the same capacity for obedience as for transgression, then, as before remarked, it would be impossible to discover any more certainty or probability of his assuming the one character than the other.

Nothing then pertains to the physical nature of man which of itself presents any certainty or probability in what manner he will act, when placed under a moral influence. It has no tendency whatever one way or the other; nothing partaking in any sense of depravity, corruption, or guilt, or making any approximation toward them; nothing which is in any sense offensive to God; but, on the contrary, it is perfectly acceptable to him; as free from every odious defect, and as completely the object of his complacency as were

the physical constitutions of the first pair when created—as are the natures of angels.

This is undoubtedly a very different doctrine from that which is ordinarily inculcated; but there can be no medium between it, and that which ascribes to man a depravity rendering him physically incapable of exercising any holiness. If his physical nature has no depravity in it, there can be nothing in it which necessarily tends to sin: if nothing evil pertains to it, it cannot but be an object of God's complacency.

And if any other proof of it were necessary, is it not presented by the consideration that *God creates* the physical constitution of every individual of the human family? Is it said? "Mankind ever since the first pair come into existence by *propagation*, and it takes place by the *laws of nature* that their constitutions are such as they are." But are those second causes fraught with omnipotence and independence? and are they the *voluntary* authors of these effects? Is he a mere idle spectator of the events which take place in connexion with their agency? Besides, who created those second causes? Is not God as truly and directly the author of all these effects, as though those causes never intervened? Nothing surely but the purest atheism can ever—perceiving the results which it legitimately involves—think of tolerating any other doctrine. God therefore creates the physical nature of every individual of the great family of man, and makes it precisely what it is. Can any reasoning then be necessary to show that nothing can pertain to it that is of itself evil? nothing but what is entirely an object of his complacency?

II. Mankind are as able in all instances to exercise those acts which the divine law designates as their duty, as to exercise those which are violations of that law.

This results from there not being any thing in their physical constitutions which, of itself, has any more tendency to sin than

to holiness,—or which constitutes any more likelihood of their exercising the one species of action, than the other. If their natures have nothing in them which of itself gives them any more tendency to sin, than to holiness, nor constitutes any more probability of their exercising the one species of action than the other, they of course can have no more *adaptation* to the exertion of sinful actions than these which are holy; and therefore no more *capacity* for the one than the other. The various attributes with which they are endowed and which constitute their nature,—so far as this discussion goes—can be nothing more than the mere powers of moral agency,—a simple capacity for *moral action*, without any consideration whether it is right or wrong. Every property lodged in their constitutions must be as completely adapted to be exerted in compliance with the divine law, as in violation of it; and of course as capable of being exerted in the one kind of action as the other.

Further proof of this great fact is seen:

1st. In the consideration, that the Most High in all the measures of his moral administration, proceeds upon it as a fact that mankind are completely capable of exercising all the actions which he prescribes to them. In requiring them to act in a given manner, he treats them as possessing all the capacity necessary for acting in that manner. There is no medium therefore between ascribing to them that capacity, and charging his government with being totally unsuited to their nature; that is, denying that it bears the marks either of perfect knowledge, benevolence, or even justice.

2d. In the consideration that all the operations of conscience proceed on it as a fact that men are perfectly able to fulfil every obligation which they violate. The principle—so far as this discussion is concerned—on which all its feelings of blame take place is, that a being's capacity to obey a law, is the foundation and measure of his obligation to obey it. Let an act be required of men which they are conscious lies wholly beyond the sphere of their powers,—

and they are as completely incapable of feeling any *obligation* to comply with the requirement, as they are of *performing the act itself.* A complete capacity for discharging all their obligations must therefore be ascribed to mankind; or it must be denied that either the law of God, or the operations of conscience, present any expression of what their obligations are. In other words, there is no medium between the ascription to them of such a capacity, and the denial that there is any known standard of obligation, or ascertained distinction between right and wrong.

III. All the sin of man lies in his exerting a nature—good in itself—in a wrong manner.

If nothing whatever of evil exists in his physical nature, it follows of course that every thing of that kind pertaining to him, must lie exclusively in the manner in which he exerts that nature.

Or to go farther: No species of the feelings or affections of man, whose foundation is laid in his physical constitution, is in itself—without any consideration of the manner in which it is indulged—of course and necessarily sinful; but his sin lies in his exercising affections—in their kind good—in a wrong manner. If nothing exists in his constitution which in itself—all other considerations being set aside—constitutes a *tendency to sin;* then of course no *foundation* whatever can exist there of any species of *affection* which is necessarily sinful; and therefore no species of the affections which he *exercises*—without any regard being had to the manner in which it is exercised—is in itself and necessarily sinful. Thus, for example, that species of affection denominated desire, is not of course and necessarily sinful: it *may* be, and sometimes is *holy;* it is sinful only when exercised in a *particular manner:* love is not of course and necessarily sinful: it may be and sometimes is holy: it is sinful only when exercised in a particular manner: and so of the other affections.

This proposition—a single remark it is believed must convince every one—expresses a great fact with which all are familiar, and on which all proceed in their decisions respecting the moral nature of actions. When—without any designation of the manner in which the affection is exercised—it is simply announced that a being exercises desire, love, aversion, hatred, fear, anger, joy, sorrow, or any other species of affection, of which a foundation exists in the constitution of man; does any one—with only that fact before him—feel competent to draw any conclusion in regard to the *moral* nature of the exercise? Does not the complete conviction exist in every mind that at that point nothing whatever is known respecting it; that nothing whatever *can* be ascertained in regard to it, until it is seen in what precise *mode* the affection is exerted? But why does this take place, but because it is intuitively seen that it does not *follow*, of course and necessarily, that a being *sins* who exercises desire, love, hatred, joy, or any other kind of affection which has its foundation in the physical constitution? that it is felt that all those affections *may* be exercised in *compliance* with the law of God, as well as in *violation* of it? and that their moral nature depends entirely on the *manner* in which they are indulged?

Such is indubitably the fact; and accordingly the law of God, in delineating the obligations of men, invariably proceeds on it as a fact. It never prohibits absolutely—in all cases whatsoever—the exercise of any of the species of affection which have their foundation in the physical constitution,—such as desire, love, hatred, fear, joy,—but employs itself *solely* in delineating the *manner* in which they are to be exerted; that is, designating the objects toward which they are to be exercised, and the degrees to which they are to be carried. Its language is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" here is an object toward which the affection is to be exercised;—"with all thy heart;"—and here the degree to which it is to be carried;—"and thy

neighbour as thyself;"—and here another object, with the limit to which the affection is to be cherished toward it. "Love not the *world*, neither the *things* that are in the world;"—that is supremely, "for every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." "Hate the *evil*, and love the *good*." "Trust in the *Lord* with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own *understanding*." "Fear not *them* [supremely] which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear *him* which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." And it is on the same principle that every precept in the sacred volume relating to the affections proceeds.

These views are farther confirmed by the fact, that there are many affections which may be lawfully and virtuously cherished to a certain extent, but which beyond that become sinful. Thus for one to love himself as his neighbour, is authorized by the law of God; but to love one's self supremely is the height of sin. In like manner to gratify hunger and thirst to a certain point is temperance, but beyond it becomes gluttony and drunkenness.

As then none of the kinds of affection which the physical constitution of man is fitted to exercise, are from their nature—without any consideration of the manner in which they are exerted—necessarily sinful, it follows that his sin lies exclusively in the manner in which he exercises them.

IV. The Scriptural doctrine of depravity has no reference whatever to the physical constitution;—it relates exclusively to the actions of man, and simply expresses the fact, that while unrenewed, he never exercises holiness: or in other words, that while left without the renovating influence of the Divine Spirit, all the moral actions which he exerts, are violations of the divine law.

This is not more manifestly in accordance with the positions which have already been established, than it is with every passage in the word of God that relates to the subject.

Let the reader turn to the sacred volume, and he will see that the only mode in which it delineates the character of man, is that of stating the manner in which he *acts*. Its language is, "Every *imagination* of the *thoughts* of his heart [is] only evil continually." "There is none *righteous*, no not one. There is none that *understandeth*, there is none that *seeketh* after God. They are all *gone* out of the way; they are together *become* unprofitable; there is none that *doeth* good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; [breathes out putrescence and contagion;] with their tongues they *have used* deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; [their language is fraught with the deadliest malice;] whose mouth is full of *cursing* and *bitterness;* their feet are swift to *shed blood;* destruction and misery are in their *ways;* and the way of peace have they not *known;* there is no fear of God before their *eyes*." "Being filled with all *unrighteousness*, *fornication*, *wickedness*, *covetousness*, *maliciousness*, full of *envy*, *murder*, *debate*, *deceit*, *malignity; whisperers*, *backbiters*, *haters* of God, *despiteful*, *proud*, *boasters*, *inventors* of evil things, *disobedient* to parents, without *understanding*, *covenant breakers*, without natural *affection*, *implacable*, *unmerciful*."

The reader perceives that not one of these expressions has any relation whatever to the *physical constitution of the soul;* they are employed exclusively in describing the course of *conduct* which man pursues,—the species of *actions* which he exerts. And such is the fact with all others in the sacred volume having any reference to the subject. Such, indeed, must necessarily be the fact; for as the word of God prescribes nothing whatever as a duty, but actions, it of course cannot designate any thing else than actions as a violation of obligation.

Is it said? "The scriptures represent the *heart* as deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." But what is it to be deceitful? Any thing else than to *exercise* deceit?

Can a being be called deceitful, who has never *exercised* any deceit? And if not, can any one be denominated so for any other reason than because he *has* exercised it? And what is it to be desperately wicked? Any thing else than to *exercise* excessive wickedness? That passage then and all others of the same kind, do nothing more than describe the manner in which the mind of man acts.

The scriptural doctrine of depravity, then, relates solely to the actions of man—not at all to his physical nature.

Can any one fail to see that the fact is far otherwise with at least the great mass of the theological works relating to the subject with which the world abounds, whose pages present so much respecting a "depravity and corruption of *nature*,"—"a *nature* that cannot but be odious and abominable to God" antecedently to any of its actions,—"an odious and detestable *tendency* of *nature* that is prevalent and effectual" to sin,—and a "vicious" "*disposition* which is the *foundation*" of all sinful exercises?

V. Temptation is the sole cause of man's sinning.

This results of course from what has been established. If nothing exists in his physical nature which--contemplated apart from the moral influence brought to bear on him—goes at all to determine in what manner he will act in regard to his obligations, it must of necessity be determined entirely by that moral influence: and that that influence leads to transgression instead of obedience, must result of course from its being on the whole a temptation to sin, instead of an inducement to holiness. It is the intervention of temptation solely that turns the scale. Were that excluded, the whole course of moral action would be in conformity to the law of God.

Nothing can be plainer than this. It is demonstrated by every consideration that has any relation to the subject. Can any one imagine a being to sin, without being under any *temptation* to it? or for any other reason than *because* he is tempted to it? to pursue a course of conduct

without any *inducement* whatever? Is it not the height of absurdity to suppose a being to exert volitions without any motives? But to glance at two or three of the considerations which verify these views:

1st. It will be admitted, that every moral act of the mind is exerted towards an object. Desire, love, hatred, and other affections, from the earliest stages of their existence, up to their termination in finished action, are never exercised except toward some specific object lying before the eye of the mind. It is settled, then, that the reason that the mind voluntarily exercises its affections toward that specific class of objects which it does, and toward no others, is, that those are the objects, and no others, that come under its notice. It cannot desire, love, or hate an object which does not pass within the range of its perception.

But it is equally certain, that it is owing to the *influence* those objects exert on the mind, that it voluntarily exercises its affections toward them, in the *manner* it does. It will be admitted, that the mind never exercises desire, or complacency toward any objects but those which yield, or have yielded it enjoyment, or which it perceives, or imagines it perceives are adapted to yield it enjoyment; nor on the other hand, is ever indifferent or averse to any objects but those which it has ascertained do not, or which it imagines are not adapted to afford it enjoyment, or at least to such a degree as other objects. But that being the fact, it is manifest that it is in *consequence* of what it has experienced, or perceived, or imagined it perceived in regard to those objects, that it voluntarily exercises its affections toward them in the *manner* in which it does; that is, regards them with desire or indifference, complacency or aversion. In other words, it exercises its affections toward them in the *manner* in which it does, on account of the *effects* which they have produced in it; and that is on account of the *influence* they have exerted on it.

The influence which those objects exert undoubtedly depends much,

First. On the connexion in which they occur; or the circumstances under which they come before the mind. Food may in health excite desire, and disgust in sickness. Wealth may be an object of desire in the likelihood of continued life, and of disregard in the prospect of immediate death. And death, which when contemplated as a remote event, scarce throws a shade of concern over the mind, at the door may shake it with alarm.

Secondly. On the length of their continuance before the eye, and the intenseness with which they are viewed. And these result again partly from the circumstances under which they come before the mind. Death, when known to be a near event, will both present itself more frequently, and maintain itself longer before the eye, than when regarded as probably at a distance. But they arise chiefly from the choice of the mind, which voluntarily selects almost all the important objects of its attention, and determines both the duration and energy of the view with which it regards them.

The reason then that the mind voluntarily exercises its affections toward *those objects* which it does, is that they are the objects which pass within the range of its perception, and its exercising its affections toward them in such a *manner* as it does, results from the nature of the *influence* which they exert on it; or in other words, the reason that it sins under that influence is, that on the whole it is *a temptation to sin*, instead of an inducement to holiness.

But why, after all, *are* those objects temptations to sin? Summarily because they are adapted, or are imagined to be adapted, to excite some of those species of pleasurable or painful feeling or action of which the mind is capable. But this topic is worthy of farther attention, and it is be-

lieved the following considerations place it in a satisfactory light.

First. A foundation is laid in the physical constitution for a great variety of both pleasurable and painful affection, exercise, or action.

Secondly. There is in the external universe an endless multiplicity of objects adapted, when brought in contact with the physical nature, to excite those kinds of feeling or action.

Thirdly. Those objects, when thus brought in contact with it, are motives to *voluntary* action. Thus food is a motive to eat, because when brought in contact with the organs of taste and digestion, it excites one of those species of pleasurable affection or action.

Fourthly. None of those kinds of affection or action—as has been shown—are of course and at all events sinful; but their moral character depends on the manner in which they are *voluntarily* cherished; as for example the indulgence of the sensations food excites, is within certain limits lawful; it is only when carried beyond that it bears the name of gluttony.

Fifthly. All holiness and sin lie in the voluntary affections. External actions are mere consequences of those affections, modes of exhibiting them, or expressions of them; and have a moral character only in that respect.

Sixthly. The mind voluntarily selects at least a great proportion of the objects toward which it directs its attention, and exercises its moral feelings; and in all instances determines both whether it cherishes at all, and the degree to which it cherishes its affections toward those objects: Or in other words, decides by choice in regard both to its indulging at all, and to the extent to which it indulges in the pleasures they are adapted to afford.

Seventhly. A motive is an inducement to holiness, whose influence excites the mind to act in conformity to its obliga-

tions; and a temptation to sin, whose influence excites it to act in violation of those obligations.

Eighthly. The mind is worthy of praise or blame for the manner in which it acts under the influence of motives, because it acts in that manner voluntarily; that is decides by choice in regard both to its indulging at all, and to the degree to which it indulges in the gratifications they are adapted to yield.

With these views then it is apparent, both that it is in consequence of the moral influence under which they act, that mankind violate the law of God; and that they are blameable for that violation.

2d. This view is confirmed by the consideration that all the measures of God's moral administration employed to prevent men from sinning, proceed upon the ground that *temptation* is the sole reason that they sin; for they all operate to the end for which they are designed, solely by *counteracting* temptation; or in other words, presenting inducements to holiness. How does the revelation itself of his *will* operate as a mean to holiness, except by the inducements it presents to pursue that course of conduct, rather than any other? And more especially, how are the *sanctions* of that will means of holiness, except by the inducements they exhibit to act in the manner prescribed, and by the checks they throw on whatever temptations may exist to pursue a different course of conduct? But above all, why are such *modes* of *expressing* and *enforcing* that will employed, unless it be on the principle under consideration? If there is no reference of that nature, why is any thing more done than a mere authoritative statement of what actions are right and wrong, and of the consequences which are to attend the course of conduct pursued? Why does that will come to us, not only as a simple requirement dictated by rightful authority, but also in the shape, at one time of an invitation emanating from paternal tenderness? and at another, of an entreaty flowing from infinite love toward us,

and concern for our welfare? Why are we urged to yield obedience to it, not only on the ground that it dictates what our obligations require, but also on one page of the sacred volume, because it is the will of the infinite and all-perfect Being who created, upholds and blesses us; and on another, because it delineates the only path that can conduct us to happiness? And why moreover, except it be on this principle, are its *sanctions* presented in such varied and peculiar forms? Why are the rewards of obedience—the glories of the resurrection body, the splendours of the heavenly world, and the perfection of its happiness—so often and glowingly delineated;—and the punishments of sin so frequently dwelt upon and presented under the most appalling imagery that the elements and sufferings of this world can furnish?

Does not the moral governour manifestly throw all this drapery around himself and the great realities of the invisible world, solely for the purpose of attracting the *attention* of mankind, and securing their regard to his will? And is it not obviously with the same reference that he has instituted ordinances, adjusted the discipline of his providence, and especially instituted a ministry?—that his will might come to men under the advantages of a direct appeal, of an association with sensible objects, and of an enforcement by all those sympathies of the human breast, and passions, and tones of voice, and other instruments of persuasion, which, from the structure of our nature, give to truth, in the common intercourse of man with man, the easiest and surest sway over the heart? And finally, is it not manifestly with the same reference, that when he leads a mind to repentance, he employs these means in their highest degree? that he then pours his voice into the soul through all these channels, and fills it with the views his word exhibits? that he draws aside, as it were, the veil from the invisible world, and concentrates the whole attention on its realities, and their relations to itself? Is not the direct and sole tendency of all this simply to cut off the access of temptation? to curtai\

and extinguish its power, and throw the whole weight of inducement on the side of obedience?

What then are the conclusions we are to form from this great feature of God's moral government? Will any one venture to pronounce this stupendous array of means, to be nothing more than an useless appendage to the divine administration? to be without any adaptation to the end for which it is professedly employed? Must not the conviction fill every mind that the reason of his bringing this vast system of machinery to bear on the soul is, that the manner in which the end to be attained is to be accomplished, is precisely that in which these means are adapted to accomplish it? namely, by diminishing the temptations to sin, and augmenting the inducements to holiness.

3d. It is on the same principle that *mankind* proceed in all their efforts to prevent their fellow men from sin, and lead them to virtue. All the measures employed by human governments for that end, are founded on it. What means do they ever devise for the prevention of crime, that are not employed simply in counteracting *temptations* to it, and multiplying inducements to virtue? In what other way does the security of life, of property, and of reputation, operate to that end? In what other manner does the forfeiture of reputation, of property, and of liberty, tend to promote it? And what other adaptation for its attainment have prisons and fetters, the scourge and the scaffold?

It is on this principle that all the friends of human happiness act, whether in a united or single capacity, in all their efforts to arrest the ravages of crime, and promote the progress of virtue. It lies at the foundation of all domestic government, and constitutes, in short, the secret of all the moral influence, of whatever kind it be, which men ever exert on each other. What are reasoning, rhetoric, oratory, the whole system of the means, and the whole art of persuasion at the bar, in the pulpit, in the hall of legislation, through every scene of human intercourse, but instruments employ-

ed to influence the conduct of mankind on the simple principle, that the method of leading them to a given train of action is, to fill their eye with inducements to act in that manner, and exclude temptation to any other course of conduct?

What then is the bearing of these important facts? Is this grand contrivance for influencing the conduct of mankind predicated upon just views of human nature? and is it employed with success? Or is it founded in error? and have mankind deceived themselves for near six thousand years in imagining that the order and happiness of society are, in some degree at least, the result of laws and their sanctions? and that the arts of the statesman, the orator, and the logician, are at once the noblest instruments of human usefulness, and the noblest monuments of human genius?

4th. It is on the same principle that the malignant influence of the Adversary proceeds. He gained a victory over our first mother through the medium of temptation, and attempted to triumph in the same manner over the Son of God.

What now are the conclusions to which these several considerations carry us? It has been seen that the position in question results from what had been before established; that it accords with the manner in which we are conscious of being affected by the agency of motives; and finally that it is verified by all the methods employed to exert an influence over the actions of men by the allwise author of revelation and providence, by mankind themselves, and by that subtle and malicious being who exerts his agency in endeavouring to spread and perpetuate the ravages of sin. On the other hand, the rejection of these views is fraught with the most fatal results, not only in regard to all human knowledge, but in relation to the divine government. Must not the most thoughtless glance at the subject impress the conviction on every mind, that a principle which thus accords with all its own and all human experience, on which all the moral influence in our world is

predicated, and which solves all the moral phenomena in the universe. does and must indubitably correspond with fact?

VI. The manner in which the fall of Adam proved a cause of the disobedience of his posterity, was simply by occasioning their subjection to temptation.

If, according to the conclusion which has just been drawn, temptation is the sole cause that mankind sin, it follows of course that the only manner in which the fall of Adam can have proved a cause of their disobedience is, that of occasioning their subjection to that temptation. There is moreover no medium between adopting this position, and embracing the doctrine that a depravation of the physical nature of man, rendering it incapable of holiness, took place in consequence of the first transgression. The fall must plainly have occasioned the disobedience of mankind, either by rendering them physically incapable of any other species of action; or else—leaving their capacity as it would have been had the forbidden fruit never been eaten—simply by throwing them under such a moral influence, as *induces* them to transgress. In other words, it must have taken place either through the medium of a physical cause, or of a moral influence. The first, it has been demonstrated, cannot have been the medium; it must therefore have been the last.

This view is sustained by all that is known on the subject either from human experience, or the volume of revelation. What bearing the experience of mankind has on it, is seen from the discussion of that topic under the last head, when it appeared that all their agency—in whatever sphere they exert it,—by which they influence the moral conduct of each other, is employed simply in throwing inducements to act in the manner desired before the eye, and removing or counteracting temptations to any other course of action. As far then as human experience extends, there is no other medium known of influencing the voluntary actions of mankind, than that of moral suasion.

The pages of revelation yield this view equal corroboration by all they teach on the subject.

1st. By the fact, that—as has been shown—all the means employed by the moral government of God to influence the voluntary actions of men, are the means of moral suasion. Their whole agency is expended in counteracting temptation, by presenting inducements to holiness. So far therefore as that goes, it appears that no other medium is employed by the Most High to influence the conduct of men.

2d. By the statements which the scriptures present, in regard to the influence of the first transgression on the *condition* of mankind. The consequences which God announced to the first pair—immediately after the fall—were to result to them from their transgression, relate exclusively to their *external circumstances.* "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying, thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Can any one fail to see that the consequences here enumerated constitute nothing more than a change in their *external condition*, of such a nature as subjected them to *want*, *toil*, *pain*, *sorrow*, *dependence* on each other, and at length *death?* Where is there the remotest allusion to any alteration in the *physical constitution* of their *minds?*—in any thing whatever, except those extrinsic objects which were antecedently to their transgression a medium to them of enjoyment, and were thenceforth to become a source of suffering? The sole

question then to be determined in regard to these external changes is, In what manner could they exert any influence over the voluntary conduct of mankind? And this question was decided when it was shown, that no external cause influences the voluntary actions of men, except through the medium of moral suasion;—that nothing ever proves a cause of their sinning, but merely as a temptation. And to make the appeal again to experience: in what manner is it that those external circumstances actually do exert a pernicious influence on the actions of men? Do want, labour, pain, sorrow, or the apprehension of death, ever prove the instruments of leading them to sin through any other medium than that of temptation?

It will perhaps be said, "But it is probable that at least some of the evils here enumerated, arise from a change which the fall occasioned in the constitution of their *bodies*." Grant that it was so;—and it goes entirely to confirm the position in question. For what are the relations of the body to the mind? Are they not merely those of an external object? Is it not as truly extrinsic to it as any part of the material universe? Is it any thing more than the mere instrument of exciting the mind to action? the medium of conveying the means of moral suasion into the soul, as the cause directly of exciting in it all those affections which bear the name of appetite and sensation, and the organ through which all other external objects gain their access to it? No change whatever therefore in the corporeal constitution could prove the instrument of involving mankind in sin through any other medium than that of temptation, let it be productive of want, pain, sorrow, or mortality, to any extent however great;—any more than could any change in the surrounding world, subjecting them to the same effects. And let the appeal be once more made to experience: Does not the moral influence in question exerted by those evils on mankind, take effect through the same medium—that of temptation—in all

cases whatsoever, whether they come into existence through changes occurring in their bodies, or arising in the external world?

Is it not manifestly the want, pain, and sorrow *itself* exclusively—and not at all any consideration whether it has its foundation in the corporeal constitution, or in the structure of the external world—that exerts that influence over men which leads them to sin?

But it will perhaps be said, "The penalty originally threatened to be inflicted on Adam, undoubtedly involved much more than a subjection to those external evils; and it being highly probable that his mental endowments were greatly superior to those of his posterity, [an opinion very often expressed,] it is to be believed that a more important and fatal change took place in his intellectual, than in his corporeal constitution." But where are the proofs that his mental powers were superior to those of his offspring? Is it indicated by his knowledge of language so soon after his creation? But is it ascertained that he invented the art of speech? How does it appear but that he derived it entirely from revelation? Is it indicated by his having bestowed names on the creatures that were presented to him? But would it at the present day be regarded as evincing any extraordinary energy of intellect, were one to give significant names to all the animals which happened to pass within the range of his notice? His being created by God surely cannot prove that he possessed any mental superiority over his posterity; for they also are all created by him. And how can his yielding obedience at the *commencement* of his existence demonstrate it, any more than the obedience of Enoch, of Isaiah, and of Paul at a *later* period of their lives, can prove that they were gifted with a higher grade of intellect than others enjoy? No evidence then whatever appears, that his mental energies were of a higher order than are those of his offspring.

But admitting that they were; granting that he held a rank in energy and splendour of endowments far loftier than is occupied by the most happily gifted of his children, and that he was shorn, and all his descendants, of that superiority by his transgression—still it cannot affect our conclusions at all in regard to the manner in which his fall became the occasion of the disobedience of his posterity. For no retrenchment of his powers that left him still capable of holiness, could by any necessity of its nature prove a cause of his sinning. How could any reduction of his understanding subject him to such a necessity? or how could a diminution of his capacity to exercise any of the species of affection for which his nature was adapted? It has been shown that none of those kinds of affection are necessarily sinful; that their moral nature depends on the manner in which they are exercised; and that a being who has a capacity to exert them in violation of his obligations, has of course the same capacity to exercise them in conformity to the divine will.

No retrenchment therefore of those powers could constitute any unavoidable necessity of their being devoted to sin, or go at all to determine in what manner they would be exerted; but it would be left to be decided entirely, as in all other cases, by the nature of the moral influence under which he was placed.

Thus far then, the word of God goes entirely to verify the position under consideration. The statement made by the Most High of the influence of the fall, represents it as being expended wholly on the *external condition* of mankind, and as producing a set of effects therefore, whose agency on their voluntary conduct must necessarily take place through the medium of moral suasion. And the effects moreover represented to be produced by it,—want, toil, pain, sorrow, dependence, death,—are precisely those which manifestly from their nature are adapted, and which from all human experience are known to be the sources of the

most powerful temptations that ever assail the breast of man. But reader, this passage expresses *all* that the voice of revelation *utters on the subject*, except the *single fact* that the *disobedience* of mankind is a *consequence* of Adam's transgression. The only other allusion made to it is in the following passages.

First.—" By one man sin entered into the world." " By the offence of one *judgment* came upon all men to condemnation." " By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." But these merely express the fact, that men *become* sinners, in *consequence* of the offence of Adam. They convey no intelligence respecting the *manner* in which it takes place, and decide nothing therefore in the present discussion.

Secondly.—" In Adam all die." " By one man's offence death reigned by one," with several others of the same import. But these merely state the fact—expressed in the quotation from Genesis—that all mankind are subjected to *death* in consequence of the apostacy; and it is moreover represented as exerting this influence over the posterity of Adam, simply by leading them to the commission of *sin*, which death of course follows as a penal consequence. " Death passed upon all for that all have sinned."

It thus appears from all the light which the lamp of revelation throws on the subject, as well as from all the knowledge respecting it we gain from other sources, that the only manner in which the fall of Adam became a cause of the disobedience of his offspring was, by occasioning their subjection to temptation. Its influence was expended entirely on objects external to their minds, and employed in producing such changes in the material world, or in the course of divine providence toward them, and not improbably in their corporeal constitutions, that their lives are rendered *of course* a scene of unceasing and severe probation; *that as a consequence necessarily incident to their condition*, the storms of trial and temptation beat on them incessantly through

the varied avenues of desire, of suffering, and of enjoyment, from the earliest dawn of their moral existence, up to that dread hour, when death seals up the sum of their sublunary agency, and bears them away to the retributive scenes of the invisible world.

Can the reader need to be reminded how unlike these views are to the statements ordinarily made on the subject, which utter so much respecting a " want of original righteousness, the corruption of their whole nature," and even " the guilt of Adam's first sin," devolved on all his posterity by the fall, and righteously subjecting them, antecedently to the exertion of any voluntary actions on their part, to the indignation and curse of God ?

VII There is a moral influence which is adapted and adequate to lead mankind to holiness.

This follows from the fact that—as has been shown—the influence of motives is the sole instrument of determining the manner in which men act in regard to their obligations ; and from the fact that they do in innumerable instances—that is all those who are renewed by the Spirit of God—act in conformity to the dvine will. Inasmuch as holiness thus actually results to such an extent from the influence of motives, it is clear that they have an influence which is adapted and competent to lead to holiness.

Or to obtain the result in a different manner : All mankind—as has been seen—are capable of acting in accordance with their obligations : All then are capable of being *excited* to act in conformity to those obligations. There must then exist somewhere among the objects to which they sustain relations, a set of instruments *competent* to excite them to that course of action. But there are no objects except *motives* that have any capability of exciting them to any voluntary action whatever. It follows, therefore, that there *is a species of motives* which are adapted and adequate to lead them to holiness.

There is manifestly no intermediate ground between this conclusion and the doctrine that men have no capacity for obedience. To deny that there is any thing within the whole circle of objects to which they sustain relations, that *can* excite them to holiness, is plainly to deny that they have any *capacity* of being excited to that species of action; and that is to deny that they have any capacity for that *species of action itself*.

This view is confirmed moreover by every other consideration that has any reference to it.

It is the only view that has any consistency with the nature of God's moral government. It has been seen that all the means which he employs as a legislater to lead men to holiness, exert their influence solely as motives; and that a vast portion of those means are obviously selected, simply on account of their peculiar adaptation to reach the heart, and turn the current of its affections to the side of obligation. But what conclusions are to be formed if it is denied that those means have any competence or tendency whatever to attain the end for which they are professedly employed? Has the Most High undertaken to gain an end by legislation, to which his means have no congruity whatever? which lies in fact without the sphere of possibility? Or has he instituted, and for near six thousand years employed all the vast and complicated machinery of his moral administration, without any object? Or again; is the real object for which he employs it totally aside from that which its nature implies, and which all his language and demeanour unite in pronouncing it to be? Will any one venture to say that his commands, and expostulations, and calls, and entreaties, poured so incessantly on our ear, and in modes bespeaking such sincerity and earnestness, *are not at all intended to induce us to submit ourselves to his will, and embrace his favour?* That after all the threatenings of his justice, no evidence whatever exists that he regards sin with any *indignation*, or has any purpose of

punishing its perpetrators? For the denial of the position in question carries us inevitably to that result. For where can a particle of proof exist that he regards our sins with indignation, unless it at the same time constitutes equal evidence that he desired us to exercise holiness, in the place of those sins? But where can any evidence exist that he desires us to exercise holiness, unless he expresses it by efforts to *lead* us to exercise it? And where are any such efforts *made*, unless in his moral government? And how can his measures as a moral governour constitute such efforts, if—let their influence be carried to what extent it may—they have no adequacy nor adaptation whatever to attain that end? If the means of his moral administration are not fitted and employed to excite us to obedience, he surely has taken no pains to lead us to that course of action; and if he has taken no pains whatever to promote it, we are without a solitary indication that he regards holiness with approbation, or has any desire for its existence.

Thus apparent is it that the denial that there are any motives adapted and competent to lead men to holiness, is fraught with the most fatal inconsistency with the whole of God's moral administration, and the attributes of his character.

Its denial is equally inconsistent with all human experience. It will be admitted that there are innumerable individuals among mankind, who in many instances exercise obedience to the divine will; and that they exert all their holy actions under the influence of motives. But that is to admit, that the motives under which they exert those actions, in all those instances, *lead* them to holiness. It follows then inevitably, that as far as we have any evidence of the existence of holiness in our world, we have the same evidence of the existence of motives adapted and adequate to *lead* men to holiness. And this conclusion is of course as just in regard to the *first* holy actions which men exert, as to those which they exercise at any other period of their lives.

But beyond this, it is indubitable that there is a *certain set* of moral objects—namely, the truths of God's word—which have a *peculiar* adaptation and competence to exert such an influence on the human mind.

Such is the testimony of the apostle in regard to them. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in *righteousness*, that the man of God may be *perfect*, *thoroughly* furnished unto *all good works*." Can any one doubt that he spoke from an actual *knowledge*, that the truths of the divine word have an adaptation and adequacy—when properly brought to bear on the mind—to produce such effects? "The word of God is quick and powerful—[when the opposing influence of temptation being removed, it takes possession of the mind, and is allowed a full exertion on it of the energy with which it is fraught,]—and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Can any one doubt that it is because such is their nature, that the scriptures every where inculcate an attention to their truths, as a mean of holiness?

Is it to be inferred from the fact, that wherever those truths are known, and in proportion as they are known, those individuals are seen who act in obedience to the divine will Wherever the scriptures are scattered, and their truths inculcated by a ministry, the children of God are found.

And finally, it is demonstrated by the well known and admitted fact, that during the period of inquiry and seriousness through which the Spirit of God leads men antecedently to their regeneration, the truths of the word are the great objects of their attention, and the instruments of producing their sense of guilt and danger; that those truths are the motives under whose influence they exert their first holy

exercises, and to a great extent also all their subsequent obedience: and finally, that of the children of God, they who make the largest attainments in piety, are those who are most familiar with those truths: who have the justest views of their nature, and in whose minds their influence meets with the least counteraction from other objects.

If these facts do not demonstrate, that those truths are in their nature adapted and adequate to excite men to act in accordance with their obligations, what can ever show that any means have any competence or adaptation to the ends with which their agency is connected? It thus appears no less at variance with all human experience on the subject, than with the measures of the divine administration, to deny the existence of any motives fitted to lead men to holiness.

But the great principles on which much of the foregoing reasoning proceeds, and many of the conclusions which have been adopted, carry us, as the reader must have foreseen, farther than the mere ascription to a portion of the motives under whose influence mankind act, of an adaptation and capacity to lead them to obedience. They require us to regard those motives to holiness under which they act when they yield obedience to the will of God, as being the *cause exclusively* of their yielding that obedience, in the same sense that those motives to sin, under whose influence they act when they disobey the divine law, are the cause of their exerting that disobedience. But the discussion of this topic belongs to the next article.

VIII. The regenerating agency of the Divine Spirit is employed solely in bringing that moral influence to bear on the mind, under which it exercises its obedience.

This proposition is connected indissolubly with the preceding positions. It is intuitively manifest, that the agency of the Holy Spirit must be employed either in accomplishing a change in the *physical constitution* of the mind, or else, leaving that as it was before, simply in exciting it to exert

the *attributes* which *form* that constitution, in a *new manner*. But no change whatever, it has been seen, is wrought by his agency in its physical constitution. And inasmuch as no depravity nor incapacity for holiness pertains to it, no such change is at all necessary: nor could, if accomplished, constitute regeneration in any sense; nor be in any manner instrumental to it. Such a change could be nothing else than a modification, of old, or a creation of new powers; and what relation therefore could it have to regeneration more than is sustained by the *original* creation of the soul? His agency then is employed solely in leading the mind to exert the physical nature which it before possessed, in a *new manner*. But it has also been shown, that there neither is nor can be any medium except that of a *moral influence* through which the mind can be excited to any species of voluntary action. It follows, therefore, that that agency of the Divine Spirit which leads the mind to holiness, is employed solely in bringing that moral influence to bear on it, under which its holy exercises are exerted.

This view is moreover corroborated by all the light which the Scriptures throw on the subject, and by all the phenomena respecting it which take place within the sphere of our observation.

1st. The word of God utters nothing inconsistent with it. It contains no intimation that the Divine Spirit in regenerating the mind, employs his agency in accomplishing any thing else than bringing a moral influence to bear on it. It utters nothing in regard to any alteration of the substance of the soul—an extinction of any old, or an addition of any new attributes.

2d. On the contrary, it directly represents the Holy Spirit as accomplishing the renovation of the mind through the medium of a moral influence, namely, of the truths of the word of God.

"Of his own will *begat* [regenerated] he us *with the word of truth*." "Being *born again*, [regenerated,] not of cor-

ruptible *seed*, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God.*" "The *word of God is the sword of the Spirit.*" "*Sanctify* them through thy truth." "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might *sanctify* and *cleanse* it with the washing of water *by the word.*" "Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which *effectually worketh* also in *you* who *believe.*" "Now are ye clean *through the word* which I have spoken unto you." "The law of the Lord is perfect, *converting the soul.*" "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, *so* shall my *word* be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." What is this but a prophecy, that it is by the instrumentality of divine truth that our world is to be renovated, and become—instead of a scene of rebellion and misery—the abode of righteousness and peace?

With these declarations under his eye, can any one believe that the commonly inculcated doctrine, which represents "the truths of the word as in no sense instrumental in changing" the mind, as having "no tendency" whatever to change it, and as operating universally and necessarily "only to rouse its enmity to stronger action," expresses the fact in relation to the subject? In what language *can* it be more explicitly expressed, that it is through the medium of the truths of the word that the Spirit of God renews the mind, than it is in these passages—

particularly the first two, whose terms "*begat*" and "*born again*," every one must see have their whole reference to regeneration? We had been authorized to *infer* that such is the mode in which renovation is accomplished, had the sacred volume gone no farther than *not teaching any thing inconsistent* with such a belief; but having advanced beyond, and presented to us this formal statement that regeneration is effected through the medium of a moral influence, what alternative is left to us but to regard it as a fact, or reject the page of inspiration as the standard of our theological opinions?

But it will perhaps be asked, "Admitting that the Divine Spirit employs motives as an instrument in renovating the mind, still, after all, does he not do something *more* than merely bringing a moral influence to bear on it?" What more? What more is necessary to be done? What more *can* be done? No physical change—as has been shown—is required; nothing needs to be accomplished, but simply to excite the mind to exert itself in a particular course of action. But it has been seen that there is no method of exciting it to any species whatever of voluntary action, but that of bringing motives to bear on it. Nothing beyond that, therefore, can the Spirit of God be imagined to employ his agency in effecting.

3d. This view is also verified by all the facts relating to the subject that fall under our observation.

Those who are renovated, neither exhibit any indication to others, nor have any consciousness themselves of having experienced any change, except in their manner of acting in relation to their obligations.

It is a well known fact that the minds of those who are renewed are, for a considerable period antecedently to their regeneration, as well as at that time, occupied in the consideration of the truths of God's word and their relations to themselves, to a far greater extent than they had been at former periods.

And finally, it is equally well known, that at the time of regeneration, *a set of new and peculiar views* respecting *God*, his *government*, and the *work of redemption* takes place in their minds, in relation to which their *first obedient feelings are exercised*; a beam of light—as it is often expressed—is poured over those objects, bringing them forward from their former remoteness and indistinctness, and giving them a presence and reality to the soul, and producing a conviction of their excellence, and of its obligations, before unknown; in connexion with which, there instantly takes place a feeling of disentanglement and extrication from the motives under which it had before acted, and emotions of surprise, and delight, and admiration, and joy, and ecstacy spring up, and thrill all its energies, and bear it away to lose itself amid the wonders and glories of the Deity.

Now can any one fail to see that all this is perfectly natural, and in accordance with what might be anticipated, if regeneration be indeed accomplished through the medium of truth; but not on any other view? If truth *has* an instrumentality in accomplishing that work, it must of course be thus *present* to the mind when the change is effected: but if it has not, no adequate reason for its being uniformly placed there, can be assigned. And if motives are the medium through which the change is wrought, the motives under whose influence it takes place must of necessity *differ* from all that had before been brought to bear on the mind; otherwise no foundation could exist for their exerting a different influence from any which had been before exerted. They must consist of *different objects*, or of objects presented in *new attitudes*, to exert a new influence; and being made up of new objects, or objects seen through a new medium, or in new attitudes,—as they would thereby become *new motives*,—their *influence* must of necessity differ from that which any other motives had exerted. But if motives are not the medium through which the change is wrought, no

reason can be seen for the fact that the change never takes place except in connexion with those new motives, and that it always takes place instantaneously on their being thrown into the mind. No cause can be imagined why it should in any instance occur in connexion with them, any more than with many other motives that enter the mental eye.

These several considerations then—that it is sustained by all the arguments which go to support the positions already established, that it is explicitly inculcated in the volume of revelation, and that it is corroborated by all the knowledge respecting it gained from observation,—make it clear, that the renovating agency of the Holy Spirit is employed solely in bringing a moral influence to bear on the mind.

"But why"—it may perhaps be asked—"if motives are the means of regeneration, are men never regenerated without the agency of the Holy Spirit?" Because without his agency the *requisite* motives never reach their minds. If they did, they would undoubtedly exert the same influence as when presented by his agency. But ask every child of God on earth, and they will answer that they never before *had such views* of the divine character and government, of the work of redemption, of their own character, and obligations, and condition, as broke upon their minds at the time they exercised their first obedient feelings, and in relation to which those feelings were exerted. And they will testify moreover, that *had* they gained those views before, they should undoubtedly have cherished the same feelings under their influence. They are conscious therefore that such an array of motives never in any previous instance reached their minds.

"But *why* do the requisite motives never gain access to their minds without the agency of the Holy Spirit? The great truths of religion are in innumerable instances extensively known to the unrenewed, are often made the objects of their attention, and are frequently presented to them in a manner apparently highly propitious to their exerting a suc-

cessful influence." The answer is given by the Son of God. "The *cares of this world*, and the *deceitfulness of riches*, and the *lusts* of *other things* entering in, *choke the word*, and it *becometh unfruitful*." Reader, such is the manner in which the Omniscient One explains it! through the medium of *temptation!* not by a "*corruption of nature*" derived from Adam; or a *physical incapacity* to yield obedience to God. The truths of the word are met, and counteracted, and soon thrown aside, by a set of opposing objects which yield the mind higher gratification, and to which it therefore prefers to devote its regard; in precisely the same manner as inducements to one course of conduct, are in any other instance, overcome by inducements to another.

"But"—it will perhaps be asked—"if men are thus incessantly assailed by temptation, if such motives as will lead them to holiness never reach their minds, why are they to blame for not exercising holiness?"

Why was Pontius Pilate to blame for sentencing the Son of God to crucifixion, inasmuch as the requisite motives to lead him to a different course of conduct were not before his mind at the time? Certainly not simply because he was *excited to action* by the motives which were then before his eye: For that was a necessary consequence of their influence; and moreover, simply *to act* under the influence of motives—apart from the *manner* in which one acts—is not blameable. Certainly not simply because he exercised *any of those species of affection* to which those motives excited him; as for example *the desire to gratify the people*; for a ruler *may* desire to please his subjects without committing sin; the moral nature of the affection depends on the manner in which it is exercised. Nor *the desire* which he showed *to maintain his reputation and influence*; for that may also be exercised in a holy, as well as a sinful manner. Nor assuredly *the regard to justice* which he manifested in his reluctance to condemn Christ without any evidence of his being guilty. Nor as manifestly *the religious fear or reve-*

rence which he exhibited, when informed that the Redeemer claimed to be the Son of God. All these species of affection undoubtedly sprang up in his mind *necessarily* from the agency of the motives under whose influence they came into existence; the indulgence of them therefore was not *necessarily sinful;* they might have been *voluntarily exercised* in *obedience* to his obligations, as well as in *violation* of them. He was to blame, therefore, solely because he *voluntarily exercised some of the affections* which those motives excited in him—namely, the desire to gratify the people and maintain his reputation and influence—to *a degree* which he was able, and was conscious of being able to *avoid*, and which he was also conscious was *wrong;* and because he *voluntarily did not exercise others of the affections* which those motives excited in him—namely, the regard to justice and to God—to *a degree* to which he was conscious of being *able* and under *moral obligation* to exercise them. In other words, he was to blame, solely because he *voluntarily* exercised them in the *manner* in which he did. Who does not see that had he—instead of exercising them in *that manner*—yielded supremely to the emotions of *justice* and *religious awe* which were awakened in his mind, he would have emerged from that scene unpolluted by crime, and transmitted his name to immortal reverence and admiration, in place of infamy?

And such is undoubtedly the manner in which all violations of the divine law take place, and such the reasons for which they are blameable.

Two or three considerations resulting from these views, demand attention before this article is closed.

1st. The distinction of the agency of God in the work of redemption, into that of a moral governour, and a sovereign efficient cause, is erroneous. It proceeds upon the ground that God does not employ the renovating agency of the Holy Spirit, as a moral governour, but simply as an efficient cause producing a physical change in the constitution of the soul.

But as that agency is occupied solely in bringing a moral influence to bear on the mind, he employs it of course as a moral governour, as truly and exclusively as he employs any other agency whatever in that character; in the revelation of his will for example, the appointment of a ministry, or the institution of any means to convey inducements to holiness to the minds of men. Of course, also, no more sovereignty is exercised in employing the one method of bringing those motives to bear on mankind, than the other.

2d. The distinction of the influences of the Divine Spirit into the classes of common and special; restraining enlightening, regenerating, sanctifying, and comforting, is to be made solely on the ground that they *occasion such diversified effects;* not on the ground that they *differ* in their *nature.* For as his influences are all employed in presenting motives to the eye, they are of course always in *kind* the *same.* The difference in the effects of his agency, arises from the difference in the motives through which he occasions those effects.

3d. Restraint, conviction, sanctification, and comfort, *when they result immediately from the influences of the Holy Spirit*, are *supernatural* effects, in the same sense that *regeneration* is. The term is to be employed simply to express the fact, that the effect to which it relates, is occasioned by the agency of the Spirit. It is *peculiarly* applicable to regeneration only on the ground that that never takes place except by the Spirit's influence. The other effects undoubtedly often do. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,—[uniformly as before regeneration]—for his seed—[explained by another apostle to be the truths of God's word,]—remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Those views of the great truths of the word which were communicated at renovation, are retained, in the same manner as other views which make a strong impression on the mind, recur by the same laws of association

when the objects which they respect, or with which they are connected, are presented to the eye; and of course continue to exert essentially the same influence. Ask the christian, and he will answer that all this is verified by his daily consciousness; that he now carries with him through every scene of his being, a set of views and associations respecting the great objects of religion, to which he was once a stranger; and that they always operate to extricate him from temptation, or check him in the commission of sin, by exciting the same species of feeling which arose in his heart when they first met his view.

IX. Men are the efficient causes of their voluntary actions.

This must be sufficiently apparent to all who assent to the foregoing reasonings respecting the nature, obligations, and actions of men, or in fact—it would seem—seeing the results to which their principles carry them—to any reasonings whatever respecting their actions: as they are not only dependent on its truth for all their propriety, but aside from it, the very terms, capacity, obligation, and voluntary action, have no meaning whatever, or at best, none but the most loose and figurative. The proposition expresses a fact universally recognised by consciousness, and needs not, therefore, to be demonstrated, in order that men may, in their estimation of their own and each others obligations and actions, proceed on it as such. A consideration, however, of the fact, that in all their judgments respecting their obligations and character, they do regard themselves as the efficient causes of their moral actions, and that the Most High also conducts toward them as such in all the measures of his moral administration, cannot be unimportant, and is peculiarly required on the present occasion, not only on account of its intimate connexion with the foregoing topics, and the advantageous illustration of it which they afford, but also by its relation to the subject which is next to be discussed.

When then is an act of a being the result of his own efficiency? When it is purely his own voluntary exertion of his nature. The definition includes several considerations. 1st. The being is the sole cause of the act: He originates it: It is wholly his own exertion of himself. 2d. It is exerted voluntarily—with design. And, therfore, 3d. It is exerted under the influence of motives; which being united, makes it his own voluntary exertion of himself We have no higher conception than that of the efficiency of God. Let the reader elevate his eye to that infinite Being who is incessantly sending abroad through all his vast kingdom the most stupendous manifestations of his agency, and what other idea can he form of any one of his acts, than that it is his own voluntary exertion of his nature, constitution, essence, substance—or to drop these terms which are used simply to denote that which he is—his own voluntary exertion of himself. And what does that idea, if analyzed, include, but that he is the sole cause of the act; he originates and effects it; it is solely his own exertion of himself; that it is exerted voluntarily; and of course, therefore, that it is exerted under the influence of motives.

And what now, on the other hand, must be separated from such an act in order to constitute an act or event, of which the being who is the subject of it, is not the efficient cause? Of course, 1st. His being the cause of it—his originating and effecting it. Instead of its being his own exertion of himself, it must be a motion of himself by some other being. 2d. And inevitably, therefore, its being *voluntary*. He cannot be voluntary in an act which he has no agency in bringing into existence. A motion of his nature cannot take place by his volition, when it is caused wholly by some extrinsic being, and when of course, therefore, he is entirely passive in regard to its coming into existence, and has no knowledge nor expectation that it is to exist, till its existence has taken place. 3d. And consequently then, its being exerted under the influence of motives. Or

to express it in one proposition: it is not his own voluntary exertion of himself, but is caused entirely by the agency of some other being.

The result then is, that to be the efficient cause of an act, is simply voluntarily to exert it. We have no higher, nor indeed any other conception of it. It is not more manifest, that by taking away from an act of a being, the idea of its being *voluntary*, we take away the idea of his being the *efficient cause* of it, than that by taking away the conception of his being its *efficient cause*, we entirely remove all conception of his exerting it *voluntarily*. The very definition of a being's acting *involuntarily* is, the world over, his being moved by some cause *extrinsic* to himself, and therefore his being *passive* in regard to the existence of the motion; whilst on the other hand, a being's acting *voluntarily*, is to every one's conception *his* moving himself, in distinction from his being moved by an extrinsic cause; *his* originating and effecting the act, instead of its being originated and effected by any thing external to himself. Our conception, therefore, of a being as voluntarily exerting an act, is identically our conception of him as the efficient cause of it.

But it will perhaps be said, "To act voluntarily, is simply to act by choice. No consideration is necessary whether the act is exerted by the efficiency of the being in whom it takes place, or of some other being."

But what is it to act by choice? "To act by design," is it answered? And what then is it to act by design? To choose and refuse? to act under the influence of motives? and to return to the point whence we started—to act voluntarily? But what is to be gained by ringing in this manner—as some are accustomed—a perpetual change on a set of synonyms, without ever looking beyond mere terms? The inquiry is, not at all what is the *name* of the species of action in question, but what is the *nature* of that action *itself?* What is the attitude or condition of the being who exerts it? How does his relation to that kind of action

differ from his relation to those events of which he is the subject, in regard to which he is involuntary? And the answer then is, to act by choice, is *to act of one's self*, instead of being moved by some other being: and that is, to be the efficient cause of the act, instead of the mere subject in whom it is produced by some extrinsic cause. Otherwise, it follows inevitably—in contradiction to all our consciousness respecting our agency—that a being's relation to the existence of his voluntary actions, is precisely the same, as to those in regard to which he is involuntary; the mere relation of an inert subject to effects produced in it by an external efficiency over which it has no control.

What imaginable distinction can exist between voluntary and efficient agency? Can the idea of a being as the efficient cause of an act involve any thing *more* than the idea of him as voluntarily exerting it? Can we *add* any thing to our idea of the latter that at all heightens or helps out our conception of the former? When we conceive of God as voluntarily exerting an act, does our idea fall at all below that which fills the mind, when we conceive of him as exerting an act by his own efficiency? and are we obliged to superadd something to the first, in order that it may include all that enters into the conception of the last? What is more manifest than that it is *impossible* to conceive of any such addition? And that arises necessarily from the *nature* of voluntary action, which to all our conceptions, consists wholly in its being originated and exerted by the being in whom it takes place, in distinction from its being produced in him by any extrinsic cause; whilst the production of an act in the latter manner is precisely what constitutes it an involuntary act.

But it will perhaps be said—a position not unfrequently advanced—"it does not follow from the fact that we are conscious of acting of ourselves in our voluntary agency, that we are the efficient causes of our actions." But are those who hold this position aware of the conclusions to which it

carries us? Our consciousness is our perception of the events which occur within us; and it takes as complete cognizance of their nature as of their existence; distinguishes their origin as they are exerted by ourselves or produced by external causes as intelligently as any thing else pertaining to them; and is of course our sole evidence of the existence of those events, and of all the external objects to which they relate. It is, moreover, in regard to our voluntary actions, indubitably, so far as we can conceive, precisely what it would be, were we their efficient causes. No one pretends to be *conscious* that his volitions are produced by an external efficiency. Every one feels that his voluntary actions differ as sensibly in their origin, as in any other respect, from those which are involuntary; and that the difference lies in his exerting them himself, instead of their being produced by an external cause.

What now is the bearing of the position in question, on these facts? It represents us as having no certainty that our consciousness in regard to our voluntary actions corresponds with fact! But if such is the character of our consciousness, it manifestly results inevitably—since the certainty of all our knowledge depends on its testimony—that we have no medium of ascertaining what is fact in regard to any subject whatever. If it is so deceptive as to impress us with a conviction that we act of ourselves, when we are entirely passive, is it not apparent that we can place no reliance whatever on its testimony in any case? What assurance, if it totally deceives us respecting the nature of our actions as it regards their origin, can we have that it does not in regard to their nature in every other respect? What certainty have we, that we are in fact *passive* when we imagine ourselves to be? Our consciousness does not more decidedly represent us as acted upon by an external efficiency, when we view ourselves as passive, than it does as acting by our own efficiency when we exert volitions. Or what can ever prove to us, that what we regard as voli-

tions, original perceptions, or recollections, are truly such? or that our judgments have any such relations to the reasons for which we adopt them, as we suppose them to have; or any relations to any reasons whatever? and consequently, that any of our conclusions in regard to the character and existence of the Deity, or of any external being, have any correspondence with fact?

Who does not see that we are hurled at once into the abyss of universal and remediless skepticism? that we have in fact no certainty of our own existence? For if we do not exist in that state of acting of ourselves, which is the only state in which our consciousness represents us as existing when we act voluntarily—since our consciousness is the only evidence we have of our existence,—we plainly have no certainty that we exist in any state whatever. We are thus compelled,—unless we would give up all our knowledge of God, of ourselves, and every other subject, and yield to universal doubt,—to regard our consciousness as according with fact in representing us as the efficient causes of our voluntary actions.

By the consideration then of the terms themselves, and of all our conceptions on the subject, we are carried to the conclusion, that to exert an act voluntarily, is to be the efficient cause of it; and that men are therefore the efficient causes of all their voluntary actions, as truly as God is the efficient cause of those which he exerts.

What now are the relations which this position sustains to the topics that have passed under our discussion?

1st. It is confirmed by all our reasonings on the subject of obligation. It has been shown, that our feeling of obligation to exercise any given course of action, is wholly founded —so far as our discussion goes—on our consciousness that it depends entirely on *ourselves*, whether we pursue that course of action or not—or in other words, that it is possible to us, and in such a manner, that nothing but *ourselves* can *prevent* our exerting it, without annihilating our *obligations* to exert

it. That such is our consciousness, none, it is believed, will deny; but its accordance with fact plainly depends entirely on our being the efficient causes of our voluntary actions. If we are not, they are of course the effect of God's efficiency; and if he creates them, their existence manifestly does not depend in any sense upon us, any more than the existence of any other effects which he creates. Depend on *us* for their existence! How? Not by our *causing* them; for by the supposition *he* is their sole cause. By our occasioning them? But the question relates solely to their efficient, not to their occasional cause. Depend on *us* for their existence! Then of course, *God* is dependent on us for the exertion of the *efficient acts* by which he gives them existence! Will any one embrace that absurdity? and for the sake of making out that *we* are dependent on *God* for the existence of our actions? Besides, is that the way in which we are conscious it depends on ourselves whether we exert our voluntary actions or not? But the proposition is self-evident. Nothing can be more intuitively certain, than that if no act can take place in us but by his creating it, it is not in any sense possible for us to exert any acts but those which he creates, nor to avoid the exertion of any which are produced in us by his efficiency. What then is the conclusion to which the argument carries us? We cannot *avoid* believing, what by our consciousness we *know* to be *a fact*, that our exerting our voluntary actions—so far as this discussion goes—depends solely on *ourselves:* and as it is intuitively certain that that cannot *be* a fact, unless we are the *efficient causes* of those actions—we are of course bound by all the rules of philosophising to believe that we *are*.

2d. It is demonstrated by the manner in which the Most High treats mankind in his moral government. If they are not efficient causes—capable of originating and exerting those actions which his law requires, there can be no more propriety in instituting a moral administration over them, than over brutes and inanimate objects. Either they

exert their voluntary actions by their own efficiency, or God creates them. But if no acts can take place in them but by his creating them, what can at once be more absurd and more unrighteous, than to require *them* to give existence to such acts? Above all, what can be more unrighteous and absurd, than to require them to exert a *course* of acts which he has no design of ever *creating* in them? Let the appeal be made to common sense. Reader, were the Most High to command you henceforth to traverse the villages and cities of this land, and daily to perform such miracles as were wrought by the Apostles—without imparting to you the requisite power, or performing the miracles himself in connexion with your agency—or at all altering his providence toward you, so as to make your obedience practicable;—nay, were he—to make the case parallel—in place of that, to chain you at home, or to bear you away by a miracle beyond the scene of the prescribed agency,—could you feel to blame for not complying with the command? Could you regard the requirement as just? Could a surrounding world? and witness with approbation your punishment for not complying with it! Could the saint on earth or in heaven most anxious to vindicate the ways of God to man, ever satisfy himself that such an act was compatible with rectitude? But why any more unjust or absurd to require *you* to exert *such* a course of acts, than—if *no acts* can ever take place in mankind but by his creating them—to require *them* to exert *a course* of actions which he has no design of ever *creating* in them? What adaptation can such requirements have to *them*, more than to brutes or the dead? *Prescribe authoritatively* to a species of beings in whom no event can take place but by his creating it,—the exertion of a series of acts, which he has no *intention* of ever creating in them,—and *prohibit* the existence in them of other events which he *designs* to create in them,—and then express indignation toward them, and inflict on them interminable punishment,

because those acts which he created *took place* in them; and because other acts which he did not create, did *not* take place in them; and finally, add to all this the mockery of calling it wisdom and righteousness! What among all the excesses of human folly and crime ever made any approximation to such absurdity and injustice? But is not this what *God's moral government would be*, if men were not the efficient causes of their actions? There surely was never a plainer case. If men are not the efficient causes of their actions, the Most High creates in them innumerable acts which his law prohibits, and then condemns and punishes them *because* he created those actions in them; and on the other hand, commands them to exert innumerable actions which he never creates in them, and then consigns them to everlasting misery *because* he did not create in them those actions.

But no one assuredly can ever adopt a doctrine bearing on its very face such tremendous imputations against God, who sees any thing of its relations to his own consciousness and obligations. or to the divine character and administration.

The result then is, that as surely as there is any holiness or guilt in our world; as surely as goodness wisdom and justice are attributes of the great Being whom we adore and trust, mankind are the efficient causes of their voluntary actions, as truly as God is the efficient cause of those which he exerts.

3d. It will only be added in farther vindication of this position, that it is sustained by the views which have been presented respecting the influence of motives. The propriety of those views plainly stands or falls with the truth of this position. If God creates the actions of men, nothing can be more manifest than that motives can have no influence whatever in determining the manner in which they act, nor in exciting them to action. How can a *motive* produce an effect in the human mind, if no effect whatever can take place there but by *God's creating* it? The supposition is self-contradictory. But does this tally with human expe-

rience? Is it the part of common sense to adopt it for the sake of its consistency?

The rejection of the position that men are the efficient causes of their actions, is, of course, also at equal variance with the views which have been presented respecting the capacity of mankind,—the influence of the fall on their condition,—and the nature of the Spirit's agency in the work of renovation. Its relations to those topics are too obvious to leave any discussion in regard to them necessary.

The amount of the whole then is, that we must either regard men as the efficient causes of their actions, or adopt the position that God creates them: that in regard to the first, it is sustained by all the testimony of consciousness, by all our knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong, by all our conceptions of the nature of efficient and voluntary agency, by all the measures of God's moral administration and the attributes of his character: and that in respect to the last, it is opposed alike to all our knowledge on the subject, our obligations and the morality of our actions, and to the benevolence, knowledge, and justice of the Deity. Can any one then hesitate which view is most worthy to be adopted?

The relation of this great truth to two or three topics, demands attention before this article is closed.

1st. The fact that men are the efficient causes of their actions, is the reason that God places them on probation; or puts it wholly to them to decide what their character and destiny shall be: that he places "life and death" before them—delineates their obligations, and reveals the consequences which are to attend the course they pursue—and then requires them to "choose life." They being the efficient causes of their actions, such a species of administration toward them is adapted to their nature, is proper and necessary.

2d. Their efficiency is the foundation of their responsibility for the manner in which they act. As their being the efficient causes of their actions, is the reason of their

being placed under law, and of its being put to them to select what course they will pursue; so it is the ground of their desert of praise or blame for their actions. And it is obviously a just and perfect foundation of responsibility, and the only one that can exist.

3d. It shows the consistency of God's desiring mankind to yield perfect obedience to his law, and of his not going at the same time any farther than the employment of his present system of means to lead them to it. That he prefers they should yield that obedience, is of course a fact, being declared by all his language, demeanour, and attributes. What were his whole government but a system of accomplished mockery, if that were not a fact? if he actually preferred that men should commit sin, instead of yielding obedience? As surely, therefore, as there is truth in his declarations, and an accordance of his feelings with his actions, it is indubitably certain that he entirely prefers that mankind should at all times act in accordance with his law. And that preference—and all his expressions of it—are of course—if men are the efficient causes of their actions—natural, proper, and necessary. For inasmuch as his law delineates to them the wisest course of action, and they are completely able, and thence under obligation to pursue it, his infinite wisdom must of necessity prefer that they should pursue that course. But were not they, the efficient causes of their actions, could nothing take place in them but by his creating it, there could be no consistency in his cherishing such a preference, while he neglected to *create* in them such a course of action; nor indeed could the existence of such a preference in his mind ever be demonstrated or believed. And—men being the efficient causes of their actions—it is also equally consistent for him—while thus supremely desiring them always to act in accordance with his law—not to go any farther than the use of his present system of means to lead them to it. He may have the best reasons for it. It plainly does not follow, that because he desires them in their *present* condition to yield

him obedience, he must, to be consistent, *lead* them at all events to obey him, let it involve the introduction of what alterations it may in their circumstances—in the structure of their bodies for example—and of the material world, and in the measures of his providence and moral government. Who knows but what the attainment of that end would require the entire exclusion of *temptation* from them, and consequently their total exemption from every thing like *a probation*, and of course, therefore, their being treated in a manner wholly unsuited to them as efficient causes, to whom it belongs from their nature to decide their destiny by a choice between good and evil? Who does not see—notwithstanding it is supremely desirable that men should in their *present* condition always act in obedience to his will—that still the most imperative reasons may exist for his not introducing any *alterations* in their condition in order to lead them to that obedience? May not earthly rulers desire their subjects to obey their laws, without being obliged—in order to be consistent—to employ such a system of means as shall infallibly *persuade* them to it invariably? May not their knowledge and goodness unite in leading them to prefer to leave them in many instances to transgress, rather than to resort to such a system of measures? And may it not be equally the part of the knowledge and goodness of the infinite Being to pursue such a course in regard to his subjects?

Such is undoubtedly the reason of his conduct toward mankind. Were there any other course fraught with higher advantages, he would pursue it in place of this. It is because he sees it to be better to leave them to transgress as they do, than to introduce any alterations in their condition to prevent it, that without employing any more preventive means, he leaves them to transgress in that manner; because he sees he can pursue a course of agency toward them—transgressing in their present circumstances—involving a higher degree of knowledge and goodness, and fraught therefore with a happier influence on his kingdom

at large, than he could were he to adopt any other system of procedure toward them. And all this is plainly perfectly consistent with its being *better*, were mankind always to act in conformity to his will, instead of transgressing as they do; and therefore entirely consistent with his *desiring* that they should always obey instead of violating his law, while at the same time he employs no farther means to lead them to it.

X. The purpose of God has a different reference to his own agency, from what it has to the voluntary agency of mankind. His purpose respecting them, includes all the events ever to transpire having any relation to them; and as some of those events are the product of his efficiency, and some of theirs, his purpose of course contemplates them according to their different relations to himself as the effects of his own, or of the efficiency of men, and only indirectly the consequence of his. His agency sustains to theirs, the relation of an antecedent to a certain consequent. In determining what should be all the events of his own agency, he made it certain also what should be all the events of theirs; and undoubtedly resolved on his own on account of its influence on theirs.

Such being the fact, his purpose then in regard to mankind is to be viewed as having the relation of a *decree*, only to *his own agency* respecting them, and as contemplating the events of their agency simply as consequences of his own, whose existence being made certain by his agency, it was unnecessary to decree.

This will be rendered more apparent by a reference to what has been advanced respecting the efficiency of men, and the influence of motives in determining the manner in which they exert that efficiency. If those views are correct, it is not to be supposed that he makes the actions of men the subject of any thing more than his purpose. Why should he directly decree the existence of what is not to result directly from his decree nor efficiency, but is to come into existence by the efficiency of men? What influence could such

a decree have? It could not efficaciously give existence to any of those actions; for they are all to be exerted by the efficiency of the beings in whom they take place. It could not be instrumental—as an occasional cause—to their being exerted; for nothing but a moral influence is instrumental in leading men to the exertion of their efficiency, and in determining the manner in which they exert it. Of consequence, it could have no influence in making the existence of their actions certain; for as their existence is determined by the moral influence under which men are placed, it is made certain by his decree to place them under that moral influence. Such a decree must then be totally inefficacious, and of course is not to be ascribed to God; but as his agency respecting their actions extends no farther than simply bringing the motives to bear on them under which they exert their actions, and as by placing them under the influence of those motives, he renders it certain in what manner they will act, his decree respecting them is to be regarded as relating solely to his placing them under that influence; and as having its whole reference therefore to his own agency.

Or in other words: His purpose was to give existence to a series of events—including all having any relation to mankind—that should constitute the highest practicable sum of good. His decree was that determination, which rendered the existence of all those events certain; and as his determination in regard to *his own agency* rendered their existence certain, his decree of course had its whole reference to that agency.

XI. The certainty that mankind will hereafter act in the manner in which they will, is constituted by the nature of the moral influence under which they are to act. Those who sin, will pursue that course, in consequence of the temptations which will assail them; and those who yield obedience, in consequence of the inducements to holiness which will be brought to bear on them. Those who are renewed, will persevere unto salvation, in consequence of God's not

suffering them to be tempted above what they are able, but with their temptation providing a way for their escape.

XII. The complete sanctification of believers will take place at their death, as a natural consequence, by their removal to a scene which will present to them the highest inducements to holiness, without—perhaps—any temptations to sin.

CONCLUSION.

These views are offered to the public, with the conviction, that they accord with the doctrines of revelation, and disentangle theology from many distressing embarrassments with which the prevalent system respecting it is fraught. It were easy to sustain them by a much more copious reference to the sacred volume, and many more arguments from other sources: but it is believed their propriety is too obvious to leave it necessary. The great principles on which they rest are plain and open to every one's knowledge, and are admitted to be incontrovertible, even by those,—as it were easy to show—whose system stands opposed to them. It is not imagined to be necessary in order to the adoption of them, that any new fundamental principles should be embraced; but simply that those which have always been held and regarded as of primary importance should be pursued to their legitimate results, and such opinions rejected as are inconsistent with them. The work is therefore commended to the friends of religion with the hope that it may enjoy their candid examination, and prove auxiliary to the cause of truth and righteousness.

VIEWS

IN

THEOLOGY.

NO. II.

THE DESIRES OF THE DEITY

IN REGARD TO THE

CONDUCT OF MANKIND.

NEW-YORK:

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Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the third day of September, in the forty-ninth year of the Independence of the United States of America, F. & R. Lockwood of the said District, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as Proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

"Views in Theology. No. II. The Desires of the Deity in regard to the Conduct of Mankind."

In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of Learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned." And also to an Act entitled "An Act supplementary to an act entitled An Act for the encouragement of Learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

JAMES DILL,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

VIEWS

IN

THEOLOGY.

THERE is scarcely in the whole circle of theology, a subject of more solemn interest to us than the question, What are the feelings with which the Deity regards the moral conduct of mankind?

He has in his law prescribed to them a course of action represented to be required by his rights and their obligations, has enforced the injunction by infinite sanctions, and employed a great variety of subordinate means to excite them to comply with it; and during every part of their agency has exhibited himself as pleased with their obedience and offended at their rebellion.

But does he in this administration exhibit to us his real feelings in regard to their agency? Does he truly desire them to comply with his injunctions?—as entirely and strongly desire their obedience in preference to transgression, as his requiring and rewarding the one, and prohibiting and punish-

ing the other indicates? Would he supremely delight to behold the whole human family henceforth always acting in accordance with his revealed will? Or on the contrary would he supremely regret such an event? Is he satisfied with that share of obedience which men actually yield him, and more gratified to see them transgressing in the rest of their agency, than he would be were they to act obediently? In a word, is it necessary to his happiness that they should continue as heretofore to transgress his laws as much as they please?

To these momentous questions it would seem as though none could for a moment hesitate to reply—he desires them always to obey his commands. That answer however is little less than a novelty in the theological world. At least the reverse is openly and strenuously maintained by a large part of the reformed clergy, and virtually by many of the others.

It is nevertheless most assuredly the true answer; as it were easy, if required, to demonstrate by every consideration which has any relation to it; but it will be rendered sufficiently apparent by a reference to two or three.

It is manifest then from the fact that the denial of it is an impeachment of the veracity of God.

What conclusions are we to draw from his imposing on mankind a system of laws, if he does not desire them to comply with his injunctions? In prescribing to them a course of conduct and enforcing the prescription by infinite rewards, he has expressed in the most explicit and impressive manner a desire that they should pursue that course. But

what is that expression but the grossest hypocrisy if he does not in reality wish them to comply with his requirements? What views should we form of an earthly monarch who should impose on his subjects a code of laws enforced by the highest sanctions, without having any wish that they should comply with it? And is such an act any more consistent with the rectitude of the King of kings?

But to those measures of his administration in which in all the forms and with all the energy that the most august and solemn action can express it he has exhibited a desire that men should always obey his requirements, he has also added the most explicit declarations. "If thou hadst known even thou in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace!" "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." As then in his language and actions he thus exhibits himself as desirous that men should always yield obedience to his law, we plainly cannot deny his cherishing that desire without denying the sincerity of his language and actions. And if those most solemn acts of his administration present to us false views of his feelings, what assurance can we have that his whole agency is not equally deceptive?

The denial of it involves a like impeachment of his wisdom.

For if his government is a work of wisdom it manifestly must prescribe the best course of agency which mankind can pursue. And if that is its character, it is equally cer-

tain that if actuated by wisdom, he must desire their universal obedience to it. The denial therefore that he cherishes that desire, is the denial either that his wishes are dictated by wisdom, or else that it is best that mankind should exert the agency which his law prescribes, and thence the denial of his wisdom in prescribing that agency. If it is best that men should yield obedience to his government, he plainly must if wise desire their obedience. If it is not best, it is as manifestly inconsistent with wisdom to require it of them.

To avoid this conclusion, those who deny that God desires men always to obey his requirements, make a distinction between a thing in itself considered, and all things considered; and while they affirm that, on the whole, it is not best that men should always yield obedience to the divine law, hold that it nevertheless is in itself considered, and that that at once explains the reason and vindicates the wisdom of the Deity's prescribing to them such a course of action.

But is it to be believed that the Most High recognizes and reposes the very foundations of his moral government on the propriety of such a distinction? For what are the results to which it carries us? To consider obedience by itself, in distinction from contemplating it in connexion with any thing else, is of course to consider it apart from all its relations and effects. But that is plainly to consider it apart from its *nature* also, which is the foundation of its relations, and the cause of its influence; since manifestly the whole nature of a thing cannot be contemplated without discerning also the relations and influence which are necessarily connect-

ed with it, and with which a complete view of it therefore must show it to be so connected. Their doctrine then according to this distinction,—when divested of its technicality,—is, that though assuredly as things are, it is not best that men should always yield obedience to the divine will, yet apart entirely from the influence relations and nature itself of that obedience,—that is, apart from every thing except its *mere name*—it is best; and that that fact is at once the reason, and demonstrates to us the wisdom of God's requiring of them such a course of action! What profound theology! How richly are those entitled to our confidence and veneration who make this doctrine the key stone by which the arch of their whole theological system is sustained, and exult over it as a miracle of sagacity which is at once to baffle and overwhelm all who oppose their creed and to immortalize the fame of their own genius!

Is it so then that the God of infinite wisdom instituted his government without any regard to its nature and effects? Prescribed to mankind a course of action without any consideration of its relations or the influence which, if exercised, it would exert; and for no other reason whatever than that which is furnished by its mere name? Prescribed a course of action which cannot be approved with any higher reference than to its name? which if any regard is had to its nature and influence,—at most beyond a very narrow limit, —is supremely evil? And is that government a manifestation and proof of his infinite wisdom? What then can ever constitute an exhibition of folly and malevolence? What

indeed if this doctrine does not, can ever amount to an admission that the divine government is in almost every thing, except its mere name, a work of immeasurable folly and wickedness?

Perhaps however it will be thought unjust to represent the consideration of obedience by itself according to the distinction to amount to nothing more than the contemplation of its mere name. But to consider it by itself, in opposition to considering it in reference to any thing else, must manifestly be at least to consider it apart from all the objects to which it sustains relations. But can that conduct us to any better result? For what are the objects to which obedience stands related? To man who exerts it;—to his obligations which dictate it;—to God who is the object of it;—to his law which prescribes it;—and to all the effects which it produces. To desire it then on merely such a consideration of it, is to desire it without any reference whatever to the fact that it is man's act,—or a compliance with obligation,—or a submission to divine authority,—or that it exerts an influence on God, who is the object of it; on man, who exercises it; or on any of the interests of the universe! Is that at all a better vindication of the Divine Being? or can such a contemplation of obedience amount to any thing more than a mere reference to its name?

Their doctrine then according to this distinction, instead of obviating the difficulty it is employed to relieve, is only a deeper plunge into contradiction and absurdity. If the government of God prescribes a course of conduct which it is not best men should pursue, it is most assuredly a bad

government, and demonstrates his character to be equally imperfect.

To this it will perhaps be replied, that "though it would prove a great evil were men actually to yield a complete obedience to the law of God, yet inasmuch as they do not, and consequently the prescription of that obedience is not productive of any of the ill effects which the existence of the obedience itself would occasion, it is not in reality a bad government, and not therefore a proof of imperfection in its author."

But according to this reasoning, on the principles of those who employ it,—there is as complete proof that the government of God is evil, as there is that rebellion against it is. For they hold that sin is not in fact on the whole productive of evil, but is the cause of immeasurable good. On what ground then do they regard it as evil? Simply because it is *adapted* to occasion pernicious effects; because if left to itself it would prove injurious to the universe,—because its becoming an instrument of good is owing wholly to an adventitious cause,—the gratuitous interference of God in punishing or atoning for it. But such, according to them, is precisely the fact also with the divine government. For, as they represent, it has as complete *an adaptation and tendency* to produce evil as sin has, and would like that if left to exert the influence with which it is fraught, inevitably prove fatal to the well-being of the universe; and it is wholly owing to an adventitious cause,—the intervention of sin,—that it does not produce such effects; the fact therefore that it does not in reality give birth to them, is

no more a proof that it is not a bad government, than the same fact in regard to sin is that sin is not an evil.

This expedient therefore like the former, fails of removing the difficulty it is employed to obviate. The result of the whole then is, that unless we impeach the wisdom of the Deity, we must regard him as having prescribed to mankind the best course of conduct they can pursue; and thence also as desiring them to pursue that course. In other words, we are to believe that an uninterrupted obedience from men is the object of his desire, for every reason for which we believe that infinite knowledge and goodness—not folly and malevolence—are attributes of his character;—that he is the best, not the worst being in the universe.

It is truly afflicting and humiliating that it is thus necessary to enter on a formal vindication of the Deity from the awful charge of being at heart the most ardent friend and patron of sin in the universe!—to employ a course of argument to show that it is not a dictate of reason nor a doctrine of revelation that the God of purity and benevolence takes a higher delight in seeing mankind transgress his law to the extent to which they do, than he would were they to obey it! And this not in controversy with infidels, or avowed profligates, but with his professed friends, the ministers of his gospel, and those too of them who enjoy no insignificant share of reputation and influence;—a doctrine of which it is not too much to say, that for its absurdity it is a greater disgrace to their understandings to embrace it than any dogma of Deism or Atheism;—and that it involves a darker calumny on the Deity than all the accusations which

the lips of infidelity have ever uttered. For where, if that doctrine is true, are we to search in the bosom of God for those glorious attributes which inspire our veneration confidence and love? We not only have no evidence of his perfect knowledge and benevolence, but his moral government, —in which surely if any where we are to look for the exhibition of excellence,—is a monument of ineffable weakness and wickedness; for it is opposed alike to his interests and wishes, and to the well-being of his kingdom;—prohibits and threatens to punish what he does and ought to desire, and demands and promises to reward what is adapted to subvert the happiness of his kingdom and what he does and ought to dislike. And we not only have no assurance of his truth, but on the contrary are certain that most of his language and actions are supremely hypocritical and deceptive. In a word, every excellence of his character is swept from the eye at a stroke, and the terrific attributes of folly and malevolence, expanded to infinity and armed with omnipotence, are substituted in their place.

To escape this conclusion is resort had to the wretched idea, that though God on the whole does not desire the obedience of mankind, yet he does in itself considered, and that that is a vindication of his wisdom? But this involves the same impeachment of his character as the doctrine it is designed to vindicate. For its meaning if it has any, is,—as is seen from what has already been said respecting that distinction,—that though God is opposed to holiness as far as its nature and influence are considered, yet as far as its *name* is concerned he is desirous of its existence! What an

overwhelming proof of his truth and wisdom! What an exculpation of him from the charge of loving sin and disliking holiness to be employed by those who are set for the defence of his cause!

Such then are the reasons for which we are to regard an universal obedience from mankind as an object of God's desire.

And what now are the grounds on which this doctrine is rejected, and rejected notwithstanding all these appalling consequences which the denial of its truth involves.

The only thing objected to it is the fact that God does not actually lead men to universal obedience;—an objection however which a moment's consideration will show is fraught with as gross absurdity as the doctrine it is employed to vindicate. For on what ground is it that that fact is regarded as demonstrating that God does not desire men always to obey his law? Plainly on the assumption that if he desires them always to yield him obedience, he must in order to be consistent *lead* them to yield it; for it is on that ground that from his not leading them to exercise a perfect obedience, the inference is drawn that it is not an object of his desire. On what ground then is it that it is held that God must in order to be consistent lead men to do whatever he desires them to do? As plainly on the assumption, that if it is *best* that men should yield obedience to him, it must be best that he should *lead* them to obey him! for it is from the fact that he does *not* actually lead them to yield perfect obedience, that the inference is drawn, that it is not *best* that they should yield it. But to assume that God must, in

order to be consistent, cause men to do whatever it is best they should do, is manifestly to assume that as a wise and good being he is under *obligation* to lead them to do whatever it is best they should do; and thence,—since *men* are of course under obligation to do whatever it is best they should do,—to assume that he is under obligation to lead them to do whatever it is best they should do, is to assume that *he is under obligation to lead them to do whatever they are under obligation to do!* or in other words, that just so far as they are under obligation to obey his law, he is under obligation to lead them to obey it!—and if that assumption accords with fact, it follows inevitably, either that men *have* always yielded a complete obedience to the will of God, or else that he has violated his *obligations* to at least as great an extent as they have *theirs!* To what results are we thus carried! Is such then indeed the reality in regard to the conduct of mankind? Is it a fact, either that they have actually discharged all their obligations, and that consequently there is no such thing as sin in our world, and that the imputation of it to them, and its punishment by the Most High are undeserved? or else that God has violated an obligation in permitting them to sin, and is at least as blameable for their transgressions as they are?

There is no method of escaping this conclusion but by denying that men are under obligation to do that which it is best they should do. But can that ever be denied? It were plainly to deny their obligation to do what the gospel enjoins,—to love God with all the heart, and their neighbour as themselves. For what is clearer than that to be under

obligation to exercise supreme benevolence to God and his kingdom, is to be under obligation to do whatever their well-being requires? It were moreover to deny the truth of the position on which the whole propriety of the objection, made to the doctrine that God desires an universal obedience from men, rests. For that objection,—as has been shown,—is based on the assumption that benevolence requires a being to do, or cause to be done, whatever it is best should be done, and on that ground the inference is drawn, that if it were best that men should always act obediently, the benevolence of the Deity would cause him to lead them to act in that manner. But if that assumption is authorized, *men* are of course as much under obligation to do what it is best they should do, as the Most High is to lead them to act in that manner. It therefore cannot be denied that they are under obligation to do what it is best they should do, without giving up the ground on which it is maintained that if it were best that they should always yield obedience, it would be the part of divine wisdom to lead them to do it; and thence giving up the whole foundation of the doctrine that their complete obedience to his law is not an object of his desire.

The result then to which the objection carries us is, that either there is no sin in our world, or else that its existence is at least as much a fault of the Deity as of mankind! Can an objection be authorized which involves such results?

On the principles however of those who make the objection, we cannot even stop at that point, but are driven to the conclusion, that in reality there is no such thing as sin in our world, but that all which bears that name is in truth

the purest virtue. For together with the position assumed in the objection that benevolence requires men to do whatever it is best they should do, they also hold that they actually do pursue that course of conduct which all things considered is the best. It follows therefore that their actions are perfectly benevolent and always accord with their obligations, and of course then even if violations of the divine law, are holiness instead of sin.

We are thus carried by the consideration of the objection itself, as well as of the topics before adverted to, to the conclusion that it is the desire of the Deity that mankind should always yield obedience to his requirements.

Or to look at the objection in a different relation. The question, why if God desires men always to obey his law, does he not always lead them to yield obedience,—is nothing more than the question, why if it is *best* that men should—as they are now situated—yield a complete obedience to the divine law, is it not also best—if they do not—that their situation should be so changed as at all events to *induce* them to obey? But that is nothing else than the question, if an obedience from men in their *present condition* would promote the glory of God and the good of his kingdom in the highest degree,—since they do not yield it,—why if their condition were so changed as to induce them to obey, would not an obedience from them in *that* condition exert precisely the same influence? But that plainly is nothing more than the question, why if a given event will produce a given effect, will not any other event if it be of the same species,—no matter how much it may differ in other

respects,—produce the same effect? Or which is the same thing, why will not causes which are the same in kind,—however much they may differ in every other respect, as for example in magnitude and relations,—produce precisely the same effects? Can any thing more than its own ridiculousness be necessary to show the impropriety of such an inquiry? How would it appear were it urged in regard to any other topic? Were it for example asked, why if such an obedience and death of the Lord Jesus Christ as are ascribed to him in the scriptures, produce such effects as they do, would not an obedience and death which had been wholly invisible to men, have produced precisely the same effects?—or if that ministry which the apostle Paul exercised exerts such an influence as it does, why would not precisely the same influence have been exerted by a ministry which had never been opposed as was that, by any enemies without the church like those who persecuted him at Jerusalem, Ephesus and Rome, nor by any within like the false teachers of Corinth and Galatia, and which consequently had never led him to the composition of any such epistles as those of his which form so large a part of the sacred volume and contribute so much to our knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of christianity?

Since an obedience from men in their present condition would plainly differ very essentially from an obedience in a widely different condition,—as for example, an obedience rendered against the opposing influence of strong temptation must differ very greatly from one rendered where none, or at most only very inferior temptation existed,—it manifestly

does not follow that because each would be obedience, the one must produce precisely the same effects as the other; nor therefore that the same reasons exist for desiring the one as the other. Of course then there is no propriety in making the inquiry, why if it is best that the one should be exerted, it is not also best that the other should.

On the whole then as the objection is thus manifestly without force, the doctrine must be regarded as sufficiently established, that God desires mankind always to yield obedience to his law.

The so general disbelief of this fact so plainly revealed in the scriptures, and so obviously deducible from the attributes of God, and the zealous inculcation of the opposite views as the doctrine of inspiration and the dictate of reason, may justly be regarded as one of the most singular events in the history of theology. Those who have rejected it seem to have fallen into the error,—though it is indeed little less discreditable to them than the error itself,—by overlooking the fact that men are the efficient causes of their actions, and contemplating them as mere machines. Thus one class of them have been led into it by their belief that the physical nature of mankind became depraved in consequence of the fall in such a manner, that without divine grace they are incapable of exercising holiness. For thence,—regarding it as God's work solely to give existence to holiness, if he desires it, in the same sense as it is to give being to material objects,—they have inferred from the fact that he has not actually imparted to men such grace as to lead them to universal obedience, that he does

not desire it; and then again from that position that it is not best that they should exercise it. The other class of them also have in like manner been led into it by their doctrine that God creates all the actions of men. For thence, from his not creating any more obedience than he does, they have inferred that he does not desire the existence of any more; and then again from that position, that it is not best that any more should be exercised.

They have thus reasoned in precisely the same manner respecting the agency of God in relation to moral actions and to material objects; and regarded his not causing the existence of any more holiness, as being as complete proof of his not desiring it, as his not creating any more animals plants and worlds is, of his not desiring any more of them. But how immeasurably ridiculous is this? Man a mere machine! Perception, volition, conscience, love, faith, enmity, holiness and sin, nothing more than mechanical operations! And what then is the Deity but the most dread trifler? and his government better than the most cruel farce?

These wretched absurdities are however hurled to the winds in mingled laughter and execration the moment man is recognized as not a machine, but a moral agent, the efficient cause of his voluntary actions. That great fact which is the animating soul of every one of his acts, and is inscribed in characters of light on every measure of the divine government, like the sun emerging from eclipse, dissipates at once the shroud of darkness and gloom which the common scheme throws over the administration of God, and

presents it to the eye in all its appropriate god-like consistency rectitude and benevolence. The propriety of every part of it is then seen and felt;—of his requiring men to exert actions, because they possess efficiency to exert them; of his employing motives to induce them to obey his requirements, because they are the means, and the only means that can excite them to that course of action;—of his rewarding and punishing them, because they are responsible for their actions for the same reason that the Deity is for his:—and of his desiring them to act as he requires, though he does not employ such means as actually to lead them to do it,—because the question whether *it is best that men should obey*, is totally different from the question whether *it is best that God should at all events cause them to yield obedience*;—that is, the question whether it is best for men *in a given set of circumstances* to yield obedience, is totally different from the question whether, if they will not, it is best for God so to *alter their circumstances*,—by using more inducements,—as to *lead* them to comply with his requirements. In short, the government of the Most High is vindicated from all those appalling objections which lie against it on the common scheme, and is seen to be characterized by that rectitude wisdom and grace which he himself ascribes to it, and by which it is rendered worthy of his character; and the agency and responsibility of man are placed in that attitude which accord at once with the representations of the scriptures and the dictates of reason and conscience.

This discussion authorizes several conclusions in regard to other topics, which deserve attention.

The fact established respecting the desires of the Deity in regard to the actions of men demonstrates the doctrine that God is the efficient cause of human actions, to be erroneous.

For since he desires men always to act in accordance with his law, and it is thence certain from his wisdom that it is best they should act in that manner; it is manifest both from his wisdom and his wishes that were he the efficient cause of their actions he would create all of them conformable to his law. Inasmuch therefore as they are not all of that character, it is certain that he is not the efficient author of them.

It demonstrates the doctrine that the physical nature of man became depraved by the fall, to be erroneous also.

For that doctrine represents it as a physical impossibility that men should yield any more obedience than they do while no more grace is given them to remedy that defect of their nature. But it is certain that God does not desire physical impossibilities from them. It were as absurd to regard him as desiring them to exert a species of agency of which they are utterly incapable, as it would be to suppose him to desire the existence of any other class of events for which no adequate cause exists. The fact then of his desiring them always to act conformably to the injunctions of his law, demonstrates that they are not physically incapable of yielding that obedience, and therefore not infected with any such depravity as the doctrine in question ascribes to them.

It also demonstrates the doctrine that God has decreed all the actions of men to be incorrect.

As it is his choice that they should always yield obedience to his law, he manifestly cannot have decreed their disobedience to it. For what is his decree but simply a *determination by his own efficiency to give existence to something* which he *chooses* should exist? To suppose therefore that he decrees the disobedience of men, is in terms to suppose it to be the object of his choice, and therefore to suppose in contradiction to what has been demonstrated that it is not his choice that they should always obey.

"With what purpose then," it will perhaps be asked, "does God prospectively view the disobedience of men? Inasmuch as he foresees it and is able to prevent it, he manifestly must have some design in regard to it."

He contemplates it simply with the design of permitting men, who are the efficient causes of it, to exert it. His purpose has the relation of a decree to those events only of which he is the efficient cause. To those of which other beings are the efficient causes, it has the mere relation of an intention to allow them to exert their efficiency in giving existence to those events.

Finally, it may be seen from this discussion how important it is that the teachers of religion should never introduce doctrines into their theological systems, which,—however specious they may in other respects seem,—are irreconcilable, or which it is at least difficult to show are not irreconcilable, with the doctrines plainly taught in the scriptures.

All truths are, of course, consistent with each other; and all which are comprehended will consequently be seen to be mutually consistent. It can never happen, therefore, that any of which a tolerable knowledge is possessed can wear the aspect of total inconsistency. When then a theological proposition which while contemplated separately may seem to be sustained by very convincing evidence, is found on comparison to be contradictory to what the scriptures teach, or at least incapable of being made to appear compatible with what they teach, there is sufficient evidence that that proposition is not correct, and it should therefore however specious it may be, be abandoned as erroneous. How happy had it been for the cause of religion had such a course been always pursued? And how many myriads, perhaps, had then never fallen under the temptations which have proved fatal to their well being? The church would then have never heard of the doctrine that God has decreed the actions of men,—nor that he creates all their actions,—nor that he does not desire them always to obey his law,—nor that their physical nature became corrupted by the fall so as to be incapable of obedience—nor that the guilt of Adam's sin is transferred to his posterity,—nor that the guilt of those for whom Christ made atonement is transferred to him,—nor that his obedience is transferred to those for whom he died,—nor that he is not divine,—nor that he did not die for all mankind,—nor that none of mankind will perish. For not one of those doctrines is expressly inculcated in the sacred volume, nor has ever, it is believed, been pretended to be explicitly taught there. On the contrary, they are nothing more than *mere inferences* from what the

scriptures teach, or what is for some other reason regarded as true. Nor is there one of them which is not manifestly inconsistent with many things plainly taught in the scriptures, nor which, it is believed, it has ever been pretended is not at least apparently inconsistent with what they inculcate. Instead of their being regarded as indubitably consistent with the word of God, myriads of minds have employed their energies in endeavouring to make out that notwithstanding appearances, they are not in reality inconsistent with it; and a deluge of volumes devoted to the same object has been poured upon the world. Yet notwithstanding all their obvious and felt contrariety to the decisions of revelation, those doctrines are confidently believed and zealously inculcated as divine truth, simply because when contemplated without any reference to what the word of God inculcates contradictory to them, they may be plausibly deduced from other positions which are believed to be true.

Thus, for example, the doctrine of a limited atonement is a mere inference obtained in that manner from the scriptural doctrine that God is just. For from the fact that he is just, it is inferred that he must punish sin to the full extent of its deserts;—and thence from the fact that he does not inflict its full punishment on those who are saved, it is inferred that it was inflicted on their substitute the Lord Jesus Christ when he atoned for them;—and then again from the supposed fact that all the demands of justice were satisfied on those for whom he suffered, it is inferred that none for whom he suffered can fail of salvation;—and then again from the fact that but a part of mankind actually at-

tain salvation, the conclusion is drawn that he cannot have made atonement for any except that part.

In direct contradiction however to this conclusion the scriptures expressly declare that he gave himself a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and all their statements offers and exhortations which have any reference to it precisely harmonize with that declaration, and proceed on the ground that it expresses the fact. Yet notwithstanding this total glaring and felt inconsistency between the conclusion and what the scriptures teach, it is held and taught with the boldest assurance that the conclusion alone expresses the truth of God, and that the declaration is at once supremely false and absurd!

How much wiser were it ever to regard whatever the scriptures teach as indubitably the truth, and to be convinced that the reasonings which produce results contradictory to them—however specious they may be—are by that fact alone sufficiently demonstrated to be erroneous?

God grant that the time may soon arrive when that wisdom shall be exercised. It will constitute an illustrious epoch in the history of religion;—the epoch of its extrication from the admixtures of human error, and the domination of human folly which have for so many ages tarnished and enthralled it.

VIEWS

IN

THEOLOGY.

NO. III.

PRESIDENT EDWARDS'

DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN.

THE

DOCTRINE

OF

PHYSICAL DEPRAVITY.

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VIEWS

IN

THEOLOGY.

The author of the discussion in the November Number of the Christian Spectator respecting "Edwards' Views of Original Sin"—the object of which is to vindicate Edwards from the charge of having taught the doctrine of physical depravity,—solicits an examination of his statements on the subject, and an exhibition of any inaccuracies which may be thought to be discovered in them.

The inquiry respecting Edwards' views on that topic—in which his philosophy as well as theology is deeply concerned—were highly interesting if contemplated in no other reference than to his distinguished talents and reputation; but is rendered by recent controversy, and by its bearing on the theology of the present day, of uncommon consequence, and seems destined by the decisions in which it shall terminate to exert an important influence on the interests of religion. The doctrine of Edwards—whatever it

may be thought to be—is undoubtedly, in its most essential features, still generally held by the clergy and churches. The controversy respecting it is consequently scarcely less concerned with their doctrine than his, and the judgment which shall be generally formed in regard to its truth or erroneousness must necessarily go far toward determining whether it shall continue to be held and inculcated as the doctrine of Revelation, or yield to the prevalence of other and essentially different views. It claims therefore, and must, it is believed, sooner or later engage the attention of the religious public, and merits the most serious enlightened and impartial consideration.

To the views of Edwards' doctrine presented by the writer referred to—who subscribes himself T. R.—I not only cannot assent as in every respect correct, but am not able to persuade myself that it even merits the praise of accuracy in any one of its important particulars. According to his representation the ascription to Edwards of the doctrine of physical depravity is a total misrepresentation. He not only has not expressly taught it in his Treatise on Original Sin, but no trace whatever of it exists in that work. On the contrary he explicitly disclaims it, and all those of his terms statements and arguments which are imagined to teach or involve it, express nothing more than the simple fact, that through the influence of some cause which is external to their nature mankind have a tendency to sin;—or in other words merely, that there is "*something concerned in bringing sin to pass*, which is the foundation of its con-

stancy or strong prevailing probability, but which is still *not an essential attribute of man's nature*,"—so that "it is perfectly consistent with his notion of tendency to sin that it should depend on man's external circumstances, and wholly cease by a change in these circumstances."—*Christian Spectator for November*, p. 568–9.

Just the reverse of this is however in my apprehension the fact. I regard Edwards as exhibiting the original sin which he ascribes to mankind as a physical depravity, and that not in a few scattered passages merely, but uniformly throughout his work. All his definitions, statements, theories, arguments and phraseology, appear to me so obviously and unequivocally to express it, as to render the ascription to them of any other meaning totally unauthorized.

What the views of Edwards actually are, is undoubtedly capable of being ascertained and demonstrated clearly enough to dissipate all rational doubt and terminate the controversy respecting it. No insuperable or peculiar difficulties can be imagined to pertain to the subject. The doctrine of physical depravity is not so unintelligible that it cannot be defined, nor so like the opposite doctrine that it cannot be distinguished from it, or that any danger can exist of mistaking the one for the other. Nor are the views of Edwards so crude or contradictory, or so equivocally or indeterminately expressed that nothing can with certainty be ascertained in regard to them. On the contrary it is believed few questions are less embarrassed by difficulties of that kind.

To decide then whether Edwards' views are what I ascribe to him, or not, it is proper first to determine what the doctrine of physical depravity is, and what may be regarded as amounting to an inculcation of it.

That doctrine then teaches *that the physical nature of man is depraved.* A physical depravity of the soul is of course a physical attribute, a created attribute of its substance, inhering in, and contributing to make up its nature and constitute it what it is, and is as distinct therefore from all its operations and all external relations circumstances and objects as is the soul itself, and as independent of all those operations and objects for its existence and nature.

The physical depravity predicated of the soul consists according to the lowest representation of it, in the soul's being of such a nature that it is wholly adapted and prone to sin, in such a manner that its own constitution and attributes necessarily cause it to sin in all its moral actions, and render it incompetent to exert any other kind of agency. In addition however to this it is perhaps always implied, and Edwards and many others, especially of those who preceded him, expressly represent that it is *sinful* in being of such a nature and *deserving of punishment*, in the same sense as it is for exerting sinful actions; and the doctrine will in the present discussion be considered as including this representation.

Thus Calvin defines original sin as "*an hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature* diffused through *every part of the soul*—which first *makes us obnoxious to the wrath*

of God, and then *produces in us those works* which the scriptures denominate *the works of the flesh.*"

It is represented by the Thirty-Nine Articles as a "*fault and corruption of the nature of every man*.....whereby man is *of his own nature inclined to evil*," and which "*deserveth God's wrath and damnation.*"

The divines at Dort used the following language respecting it. "All men are *born the children of wrath, unfit for every good* connected with salvation, *prone to evil*, dead in sin and the servants of sin, and without the Holy Spirit regenerating them *they neither will nor can* return to God, *amend their depraved nature*, nor *dispose themselves* for its amendment."

But the doctrine as often exhibited, especially at the present day, merely attributes to human nature an incapacity for obedience, or ascribes to it an attribute that necessarily causes it to sin, without so expressly representing it as in itself sinful. Thus Dr. Scott says "*all capacity* of delighting in the holy services and spiritual worship of God *is extinct* in every descendant of Adam, till the spirit of life in Christ Jesus restores divine life to the soul by regeneration." Mr. Wilberforce describes it as "a principle of corruption" that is the cause that men sin. His language is "such, [that all men are sinners,] must be confessed to be the state of facts; *and how can this be accounted for* on any other supposition than that of *some original taint, some radical principle of corruption?* All other solutions are unsatisfactory, whilst *the potent cause which has been assigned*

does abundantly account for the effect. Thus then it appears that *the corruption of human nature* is proved by the same mode of reasoning as has been deemed conclusive in establishing the existence and ascertaining the laws of the principle of gravitation."

Such then being the doctrine of physical depravity, to inculcate it is to teach that the physical nature of man is depraved, or to represent the nature of the soul as such that its own constitution and attributes necessarily cause it to sin in all its moral agency, and as on that account sinful and deserving of punishment.

The question now is whether Edwards presents such a view of the nature and depravity of mankind, or on the contrary only teaches that there is "something concerned in bringing sin to pass which is not an essential attribute" of their nature. If he ascribes moral depravity to their physical nature in distinction from their actions and condition, or represents their nature as destitute of the attributes requisite to the exercise of holiness, and so constituted as to be adapted only for the exertion of sinful actions—in such a manner that it of course and necessarily exerts those actions in all its moral agency,—and then on that account denominates it "depraved, corrupt, odious, abominable," "guilty," and "in itself corrupt and sinful," he must undoubtedly be regarded as teaching the doctrine of physical depravity. And that such are his representations, his definitions, plan of reasoning, arguments, interpretations of scripture, express declarations, and current phraseology all concur in rendering most abundantly apparent.

I. He presents to us that doctrine in his definitions of Original Sin.

"By original sin" he says "as the phrase has been most commonly used by divines is meant, *the innate sinfull depravity of the heart.* But yet when the doctrine of original sin is spoken of, it is vulgarly understood in that latitude as to include not only *the depravity of nature*, but *the imputation of Adam's first sin.*—I shall in the first place consider this doctrine with regard to *the corruption of nature.*" "*As all moral qualities, all principles either of virtue or vice lie in the disposition of the heart*, I shall consider whether we have any evidence that the heart of man is naturally *of a corrupt and evil disposition.* This is strenuously denied by many late writers who are enemies to the doctrine of original sin.—The way we come by the idea of any such thing as disposition or tendency is by observing what is constant or general *in event;* especially under a great variety of circumstances, and above all when the effect or event continues *the same* through great and various opposition—much and manifold force and means used to the contrary not prevailing to hinder the effect. I do not know that such a prevalence of *effects* is denied to be an evidence of prevailing tendency in *causes and agents;* or that it is expressly denied by the opposers of the doctrine of original sin that if in the course of events it universally or generally proves that mankind are *actually corrupt*, this would be an evidence of *a prior corrupt propensity in the world of mankind*, whatever may be said by some which if taken with its plain consequences may seem to imply a denial of this."

"But for the greater clearness it may be proper here to premise one consideration that is of great importance in this controversy, and is very much overlooked by the opposers of the doctrine of original sin in their disputing against it, which is this—That is to be looked upon as *the true tendency of the natural or innate disposition of man's heart*, which appears to be its tendency when we consider things as they are *in themselves or in their own nature*, without the interposition of divine grace. Thus *that state of man's nature, that disposition of the mind* is to be looked upon as *evil and pernicious* which as it is *in itself tends to extremely pernicious consequences.* If there be any thing *in the nature of man whereby* he has *an universal unfailing tendency to that moral evil*, which according to the real nature and true demerit of things as they are in themselves implies his utter ruin, that must be looked upon as *an evil tendency or propensity.*"

"And then it must be remembered that it is a *moral depravity* we are speaking of, and therefore when we are considering whether such depravity do not appear by *a tendency to a bad effect or issue*, it is *a moral tendency* to such an issue that is the thing to be taken into the account. A moral tendency or influence is by *desert*. Then may it be said *man's nature or state is attended with a pernicious or destructive tendency in a moral sense*, when it tends to that which *deserves misery and destruction*. And therefore it equally shows *the moral depravity of the nature of mankind* in their present state, whether that nature be universally attended with an effectual tendency to destructive vengeance *actually executed*, or to their *deserving* misery and ruin, or to their *just exposedness* to destruction, however that fatal consequence may be prevented by grace, or whatever the actual event be."—*Edw. Works, vol. 6. p.* 129. 133.

In these definitions then with which he commences his Treatise, he represents original sin as a "*depravity*" *and* "*corruption of nature*,"—as *a created depravity*, designating it as "*innate*" and "*prior*" *to actions*—as *the cause that men exert sinful actions*, exhibiting them as its effects, and inferring from them its existence,—and finally as *a blameable depravity*, denominating it "moral," "sinful," "evil and pernicious." One would imagine these quotations alone were sufficient to decide the controversy respecting his views, if his definitions and statements are to have any influence on the decision. No one surely can persuade himself that in their most obvious meaning they teach the doctrine which T. R. ascribes to him, nor that it is credible that had he designed to define that doctrine, he would have selected such terms to express it.

II. His statement of his object and plan of argument in the Treatise presents similar evidence that his doctrine is that of physical depravity.

"Having" he remarks "premised these things"—the definitions which have been quoted and other explanations forming his introduction—" I now proceed to say,

" That mankind are all naturally in such a state as is attended without fail with this consequence or issue, that they universally run themselves into that which is in effect their own utter eternal perdition, as being finally accursed of God and the subjects of his remediless wrath through sin.

" *From which I infer that the natural state of the mind of man* is attended with *a propensity of nature* which is *prevalent and effectual to such an issue ;* and that therefore *their Nature is Corrupt and Depraved with a Moral Depravity that amounts to and implies their utter undoing.*

" Here I would first consider the truth of the proposition and then would show the certainty of the consequences which I infer from it. If both can be clearly and certainly proved, then I trust none will deny but that *the doctrine of original depravity is evident*, and so the falseness of Dr. Taylor's scheme demonstrated, the greatest part of whose book called *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, &c.* is *against the doctrine of innate depravity.* He speaks of the conveyance of *a corrupt and sinful nature* to Adam's posterity, as *the grand point to be proved by the maintainers of the doctrine of original sin.*"—p. 137.

Now if language has any meaning, the formal and definite exposition which he here gives of his design and plan of executing it, surely renders it as certain as any declaration from him could that it was his object to demonstrate the doctrine of physical depravity. He affirms, and proposes to prove the proposition, that mankind are all naturally in such a state that they universally run themselves into *sin*, and thereby into *an exposedness to ruin ;*—then *from that fact infers* and proposes to prove the propriety of the inference, that *the natural state of the mind of man* is attended with *a propensity of nature* which is *prevalent*

and effectual to such an issue ; and *then again from that supposed fact infers* and proposes to demonstrate it, *that their Nature is Corrupt and Depraved with a Moral Depravity that amounts to, and implies their utter undoing.* There surely therefore never was a design of demonstrating a doctrine more plainly and unequivocally expressed than he here announces the intention of proving that the nature of man is corrupt and depraved with a moral depravity, nor a plan proposed for the accomplishment of an object, whose nature showed it to be designed for its attainment more clearly, than this plan demonstrates that it was his object to prove that doctrine. No other meaning can be assigned to his language, nor any other object ascribed to his argument without the most obvious misconstruction of them. What for example can his two inferences mean if according to T. R.'s representation it was not his design to teach that the physical nature of man is depraved, but only that there is "something concerned in bringing sin to pass which is not an essential attribute of man's nature," but depends "wholly" on his "external circumstances?" Propose to prove from the fact that all men sin, that *their nature is the cause* of their sinning, and then from that fact that "*their nature*" *itself* "*is corrupt and depraved with a moral depravity*," and yet after all neither believe nor design to prove either of these, but precisely the opposite position that the cause concerned in bringing sin to pass is *wholly external to their nature!* Does such a course accord with the perspicacity and logical accuracy of Edwards?

To the object which he thus proposed and method which he marked out for its attainment, he rigidly adhered through his whole argument. He first demonstrated his proposition " that all mankind come into the world in such a state as without fail comes to this issue, namely the universal commission of sin, or that every one who comes to act in the world as a moral agent is in a greater or less degree guilty of sin," and " that all sin deserves and exposes to utter and eternal destruction under God's wrath and curse."—p. 137.

After establishing this proposition in his first section, he proceeded in his second, to draw from it and demonstrate his first inference, that " it follows from the proposition proved in the foregoing section that all mankind are under the influence of a prevailing effectual tendency in their nature to that sin and wickedness which implies their utter and eternal ruin." His language is,

" The proposition laid down being proved the consequence of it remains to be made out, viz that *the mind of man* has *a natural tendency or propensity* to that event which has been shown universally and infallibly to take place, and that this is *a corrupt and depraved propensity.* I shall here consider the former part of this consequence, namely, whether such an universal constant infallible event is truly a proof of the being of any tendency or propensity to that event, leaving the evil and corrupt nature of such a propensity to be considered afterwards."—p. 144.

This he endeavoured to prove by showing that *a tendency* is a stated prevalence or preponderation in the nature or state of *causes* that is effectual to a stated prevalence of a particular kind of *effect*,—that *a stated prevalence of any*

kind of effect or event proves that there is *a tendency* to that effect, in *the nature and state of its causes*,—and that *the cause of the effect in question*—the sin which all men run into —lies exclusively in *their nature* and not in *any external circumstances* ; so that the fact that all men sin,—proved in his proposition—demonstrated that the cause which leads them to sin lies in their nature. This topic will be again adverted to.

Having as he supposed established this position, he proceeded in his third section to demonstrate the other part of his first inference—that that tendency to sin is *corrupt and depraved*, and then from that supposed fact to draw and demonstrate his second inference, that therefore *human nature itself* "*is corrupt and depraved with a moral depravity.*" His language is,

"That propensity which has been proved to be in the nature of all mankind, must be *a very evil depraved and pernicious* propensity, making it manifest that *the soul of man* as it is *by nature* is in *a corrupt fallen and ruined state* which is the other part of the consequence drawn from the proposition laid down in the first section."

And after showing that the only question to be considered in order to determine whether man's "nature is good or evil, pure or corrupt, sound or ruined" is, whether it has such a tendency to sin as he had endeavoured to prove belongs to it, he then says,

"Surely that tendency which in effect is an infallible tendency to eternal destruction, is *an infinitely dreadful and pernicious tendency;* and *that nature and frame of mind* which implies such a tendency must be *an infinitely dreadful and pernicious frame of mind.*" "A propensity to that sin which brings God's eternal wrath and curse (which has been proved to belong to the nature of man) is *evil*, not only as it is calamitous and sorrowful ending in great natural evil, but as it is

odious and detestable. For by the supposition it tends to *that moral evil* by which the subject becomes odious in the sight of God and liable as such to be condemned and utterly rejected and cursed by him. This also makes it evident that *the state* which it has been proved mankind are in is *a corrupt state in a moral sense*, that it is inconsistent with the fulfilment of the law of God which is the rule of moral rectitude and goodness. That tendency which is opposite to that which the moral law requires and insists upon, and prone to that which the moral law utterly forbids and eternally condemns the subject for, is doubtless *a corrupt tendency in a moral sense.*

"So that this depravity is both *odious* and also *pernicious fatal and destructive in the highest sense*, as inevitably tending to that which implies man's eternal ruin; it shows that man *as he is by nature* is in *a deplorable and undone state in the highest sense.* And this proves that men do not come into the world *perfectly innocent* in the sight of God, and without any just exposedness to his displeasure. For the being *by nature in a lost and ruined state in the highest sense*, is not consistent with being by nature *in a state of favour with God.*" p. 153–5.

Such are his representations and arguments. From the first part of his first inference—that the cause that men sin lies wholly in their nature—he reasons that as the effect produced by that cause is "infinitely evil," the cause itself must also be equally evil and in a moral sense; and then from that position argues in accordance with his second inference, that as the nature of man has such a depraved and evil cause in it, it must itself be depraved and evil in the same degree and sense.

His statements and arguments thus render it as obvious as demonstration can make it, that the doctrine which it was his object to establish is that of physical depravity. They show conclusively that he considered the fact that men *sin* as they do, as demonstrating that *their nature necessarily causes* them to sin, and regarded that supposed fact as

evincing that *their nature itself is depraved;* or in other words that he reasoned respecting the *nature of the mind* from the *nature of the actions* which it exerts, and held that it is because it is *itself depraved* that it exerts *depraved actions*, and that is in so many words the doctrine of physical depravity.

III. He exhibits the same views in his representations respecting tendency to sin.

His statements and reasonings respecting this subject particularly merit the reader's examination, as they furnish much from which he can both learn what were his views of the nature of man, and judge of the accuracy of T. R.'s representations, who in contravention to Edwards' express declaration that the tendency to sin is seated in the nature —not in the circumstances of man, and of course therefore that it is a physical attribute—affirms that "nothing appears" in what Edwards says in regard to it "like the doctrine that a propensity or tendency to sin belongs to human nature as a substantial property or attribute," and that "it is perfectly consistent with his notion of tendency to sin that it should depend on man's external circumstances, and wholly cease by a change in these circumstances;" which he intimates Edwards could never "admit and yet maintain this tendency to be a substantial attribute of man's nature independent of all circumstances."

Edwards first defines the term tendency according to its general use in the following language:

"To determine whether the unfailing constancy of the above named event be an evidence of tendency let it be considered what can be meant by tendency but a prevailing liableness or exposedness to such or such an event. Wherein consists the notion of any such thing, but some stated prevalence or preponderation in the nature or state of causes or occasions, that is followed by and so proves to be effectual to a stated prevalence or commonness of any particular kind of effect? Or something in the permanent state of things concerned in bringing a certain sort of event to pass, which is a foundation for the constancy or strong prevailing probability of such an event? If we mean this by tendency (as I know not what else can be meant by it but this or something like this,) then it is manifest that when we see *a stated prevalence of any kind of effect or event*, there is *a tendency* to that effect in the nature and state of its *causes*. A common and steady effect shows that there is some where a preponderation a prevailing exposedness or liableness in the state of things to what comes so steadily to pass. The natural dictate of reason shows that where there is *an effect* there is *a cause*, and a cause *sufficient* for the effect, because if it were not sufficient it would not be effectual; and that therefore where there is a stated prevalence of the effect there is a stated prevalence in the cause. A steady effect argues a steady cause. We obtain a notion of such a thing as tendency no other way than by observation; and we can observe nothing but events; and it is the commonness or constancy of events that gives us a notion of tendency in all cases. Thus we judge of tendencies in the natural world. Thus we judge of the tendencies or propensities of nature in minerals, vegetables, animals, rational and irrational creatures." p. 145.

He is thus far employed in stating the nature of tendency in general, and represents it as being that in the nature or state of a cause by which it is that it uniformly produces a particular kind of effect. T. R. however because he once uses the word occasions in his definition of *tendency in general*, seems willing to have it believed that he means nothing more by *tendency to sin* than an attribute of mere occasions. Such an inference would undoubtedly have been totally unauthorized had Edwards added nothing to that

general definition, but it is entirely precluded by his explicitly defining *tendency to sin* as a *fixed cause.* After showing that a stated prevalence of an effect proves that there is a stated prevalence in its cause, he remarks:

"Here may be observed the weakness of that objection against the validity of the argument for *a fixed* propensity to sin *from the constancy and universality of the event.* that Adam sinned in one istance *without* a fixed propensity. Without doubt *a single* event is an evidence that there was some cause or occasion of that event; but the thing we are speaking of is *a fixed cause. Propensity* is *a stated continued thing.* We justly argue that *a stated effect*, must have *a stated cause*, and truly observe that we obtain the notion of *tendency or stated preponderation in causes*, no other way than by observing *a stated prevalence of a particular kind of effect.*" p. 147.

Tendency to sin then is a cause—for if it is the nature or state of a cause it is of course the cause itself—which uniformly produces sin.

This tendency to sin he represents as existing in the created nature of man. He says,

"It is manifest that this tendency which has been proved, does not consist in any particular *external circumstances* that some or many are in peculiarly tempting or influencing their minds, but is *inherent, and is seated* in that *nature* which is common to all mankind, which they carry with them wherever they go, and still remains the same however circumstances may differ."

Let the reader judge whether this accords with T. R.'s statement that "nothing appears" in what Edwards says on this subject "*like* the doctrine that a propensity or tendency to sin belongs to human nature as a substantial attribute," and that "it is perfectly consistent with his notion of tendency to sin that it should depend on man's external circumstances, and wholly cease by a change in these circumstances." Edwards proceeds,

"For it is implied in what has been proved and shown to be confessed, that the same event comes to pass in *all circumstances* that any of mankind *ever are or can be* under in the world." "We have the same evidence that the propensity in this case lies in *the nature* of the subject, and does not arise from any particular *circumstances*, as we have in any case whatsoever, which is only by the effects appearing to be the same in all changes of time and place, and under all varieties of circumstances. It is in this way only we judge that *any* propensities which we observe in mankind are such as are seated in their *nature* in all other cases. It is thus we judge of the mutual propensity betwixt the sexes, or of the dispositions which are exercised in any of the natural passions or appetites, that they truly belong to the nature of man, because they are observed in mankind in general through all countries nations and ages, and in all conditions." p. 149.

He thus on the one hand explicitly declares that this tendency to sin is "inherent and seated in that nature which is common to all mankind, which they carry with them wherever they go and still remains the same however circumstances may differ;" and on the other that it "does not consist in any external circumstances." One would imagine this must be sufficiently explicit to satisfy even the most incredulous. If it is not it surely must be pronounced impossible to state an article of belief in language that shall afford any certainty in regard to it. I will thank T. R. to point out a topic in Edwards' voluminous works on which he has more fully and unequivocally expressed an opinion, or to advance an argument to sustain his denial that Edwards here teaches what I ascribe to him, that shall not assume what will furnish materials for the denial with equal propriety and plausibility that he held any other article of belief which he ever avowed.

If any further evidence that he entertained the views

here attributed to him, is necessary, it is furnished by his next page, which will also present the reader an opportunity of again contrasting his statements with the representations of T. R.

In the paragraph immediately succeeding that in which he affirms that the tendency to sin is seated in the nature of men—not in their external circumstances,—he makes the supposition that others, instead of assenting to his representation, should adopt the opposite view. His language is,

> " If any should say though it be evident that there is a tendency in the state of things to this general event, that all mankind should fail of perfect obedience, and should sin and incur a demerit of eternal ruin, and also that this tendency does not lie in any distinguishing circumstances of any particular people person or age, yet it may not lie in man's *nature*, but in *the general constitution and frame of this world* into which men are born: Though the nature of *man* may be *good* without any evil propensity inherent in it, yet the nature and universal state of *this earthly world* may be such as to be full of so many and strong temptations every where, and of such a powerful influence on such a creature as man dwelling in so infirm a body, &c. that the result of the whole may be a strong and infallible tendency in such a state of things to the sin and eternal ruin of every one of mankind." p. 150.

The *supposition*—not *objection* as T. R. calls it—here stated is, that two of the positions which he had employed himself in endeavouring to establish should be admitted, namely, " that there is a tendency in the state of things to this general event that all mankind should sin and incur a demerit of eternal ruin, and also that this tendency does not lie in any distinguishing circumstances of any particular person," but that yet after all it should be held that " it

may not lie in man's *nature*, but in the general *constitution and frame of this world.*"

T. R. in his observations on Edwards' answer to this supposed assumption, represents him as assenting to it as precisely what he had himself just been maintaining, and thereby proving that "it is perfectly consistent with his notion of tendency to sin that it should depend on man's external circumstances." His language is,

"The above *objection* Edwards does not answer by saying that it asserts that which is false, but by showing that it amounts to the same thing which he maintains. He says "it alters not the case," i. e. the fact is the same; man in his present state is depraved and ruined by propensities to sin, [but that was not at all in debate here; his opponents are represented in the supposition as admitting all that he had advanced in regard to it,] whether we say this tendency to sin arises from his external circumstances, or belongs to the nature of man. [Edwards however, as the reader will see from the passage when quoted, advances nothing of that kind, but what he says is that the fact that man *is* depraved and ruined in his present state by a tendency to sin, demonstrates that that tendency *is seated in his nature.*] What he contends for is the propriety of assuming a thing to be in its proper place in the universe when speaking of its nature, a point of verbal accuracy [how? assuming a thing a point of *verbal* accuracy?] which cannot admit of much debate. [But that is not in the remotest sense the object of Edwards. On the contrary what he contends for is, the propriety of regarding *the propensities* which a being exhibits when *in its proper place*, as propensities which *inhere in and belong to its nature.*] It is then perfectly consistent with his notion of tendency to sin that it should depend on man's external circumstances, and wholly cease by a change in these circumstances. But how could he admit this and yet maintain this tendency to be a substantial attribute of man's nature independent of all circumstances?"

But how could he make *such* an admission after having in the preceding page explicitly and repeatedly declared that this tendency does not lie in man's external circum-

stances, but "is inherent and seated in that nature which is common to all mankind, which they carry with them wherever they go and still remains the same however circumstances may differ," because "it is implied in what has been proved, that the same event comes to pass in *all* circumstances that any of mankind *ever are or can be* under in the world!" T. R. in his concern for Edwards' consistency should have questioned himself in regard to the propriety of the admission which he attributes to him, before ascribing it to him with so much confidence. A more extraordinary misapprehension could scarcely have occurred.

Edwards having in the preceding part of the section endeavoured to prove that mankind are all under the influence of a prevailing tendency to sin, and that that tendency is seated in their nature—not in their circumstances,—makes in the passage under consideration, the supposition that it should be admitted that they are under the influence of such a tendency, but denied that it is thence certain that that tendency is seated in their nature, and held that it may consist in the constitution and frame of this world. The point of difference therefore between Edwards and the persons supposed is simply, whether as Edwards had affirmed the fact that all men are under the influence of such a tendency, does, or does not demonstrate that it is seated in their nature. Whether then, as T. R. represents, Edwards abandons and contradicts what he had just before advanced, and assents to the opposite assumption of

his opponents, let the reader judge from his reply to that assumption. He says,

"To this I would reply that *such an evasion* will not at all *avail* to the purpose of those *whom I oppose* in this controversy. It alters not the case as to this question *whether man is not a creature that in his present state is depraved and ruined by propensities to sin.* If any creature be of *such a nature that it proves evil in its proper place*, or in the situation which God has assigned it in the universe, it is of an *evil nature.* That part of the system is not *good* which is not good in its *place* in the system; and those *inherent qualities* of that part of the system which are not good but corrupt in that place, *are justly looked upon* as *evil* inherent qualities. That propensity is truly esteemed to belong to *the nature* of any being, or to be *inherent* in it, that is *the necessary consequence* of its nature considered together with its *proper situation in the universal system of existence*, whether that propensity be good or bad. It is the nature of a stone to be heavy, but yet if it were placed as it might be at a distance from this world, it would have no such quality. But seeing a stone is of such a nature that it will have this quality or tendency in its proper place here in this world where God has made it, it is properly looked upon as a propensity belonging to its nature. And if it be a good propensity here in its proper place, then it is a good quality of its nature; but if it be contrarywise, it is an evil natural quality. *So if mankind are of such a nature that they have an universal effectual tendency to sin and ruin in this world where God has made and placed them, this is to be looked upon as a pernicious tendency belonging to their nature.* There is perhaps scarce any such thing in beings not independent and self existent as any power or tendency but what has some dependence on other beings which they stand in some connexion with in the universal system of existence. Propensities are no propensities any otherwise than as taken with their objects. Thus it is with the tendencies observed in natural bodies, such as gravity magnetism, electricity, &c. And thus it is with the propensities observed in the various kinds of animals; and thus it is with most of the propensities in created spirits." p. 151.

The question now is, whether Edwards here answers the assumption of his opponents, "by saying that it asserts that

which is false," or "by showing that it amounts to the same thing which he maintains." And can any one possibly persuade himself that he here, according to the representation of T. R., explicitly abandons the ground he had so strenuously maintained on the preceding page, that the tendency to sin is seated exclusively in the nature of man and adopts the position of his opponents, that it is not seated in his nature, but in his external circumstances; and even pretends that that is what he had been all along maintaining? His declaration that "if mankind are of *such a nature* that they have *an universal effectual tendency to sin in this world where God has placed them*, it is to be looked upon as *a pernicious tendency belonging to their nature*,"—is *a denial* that that tendency is a substantial attribute of their *nature*, and a declaration that it depends entirely on *their external circumstances!* How much is it to be regretted that any one should attempt to sustain a cause which requires such representations for its support! The pretence that such is Edwards' meaning is too gross an extravagance to be passed off upon any one who knows any thing of the signification of language. Where is there a syllable in what he says that can show that such ought to be our interpretation of it,—that does not lend its whole weight to demonstrate that such a construction would be in total contradiction to his meaning? His language is—"*such an evasion* will not at all *avail* to the purpose of those whom I *oppose*." This surely is a novel mode of assenting to the ground which they had taken as "amounting

to the same thing which he maintains." But what is their evasion? Their assumption that the tendency to sin is not seated in *the nature of man*, but in *the general frame of the world*. But how an evasion of his doctrine if "it is perfectly consistent with his notion of tendency to sin that it should depend on man's external circumstances, and wholly cease by a change in these circumstances?" And why make the supposition of an evasion by an assumption which is not an evasion, but "the same thing which he maintains?" Was Edwards accustomed in this manner to trifle with his readers?

But what does he advance to show that their assumption will not avail to their purpose? A total denial of the propriety of that assumption, and the declaration on the contrary that "if any creature be of such a nature that it proves *evil in the situation which God has assigned it*, it is of an evil *nature*,"—that "that part of the system is *not good*, which is not good in *its place* in the system"—that "*those inherent qualities* of that part of the system which are not good but *corrupt in that place*, are [contrary to their assumption] *justly looked upon as evil* inherent qualities," and that "that propensity is *truly esteemed to belong to the nature* of any being or to *be inherent* in it, that is *the necessary consequence of its nature* considered together with *its proper situation in the universal system of existence*,"—that is which it necessarily exhibits in its proper place. Is this answering the assumption of his opponents that the tendency to sin does not lie in *the nature of man* but in *the gene-*

ral constitution and frame of this world" by assenting to it as the same thing which he maintains?

I appeal to the intelligence and candour of the reader whether there is a proposition more explicitly stated and defended by Edwards in the Treatise, and in more perfect accordance with every other position which he advances and all the principles of his reasoning and the whole object of his argument, than he here maintains that the tendency to sin is seated in the nature of man and not in his external circumstances.

It is equally apparent that he regarded it as lying wholly in the nature of man "considered alone," and not in his external situation, from the next paragraph, in which he proceeds in the refutation of the assumption of his opponents by showing that it does not possess any advantages over his own representation, in regard to the objection that it exhibits God as concerned in giving existence to "this tendency." His language is,

> "It may be further observed that it is exactly the same thing as to the controversy concerning an agreeableness with God's moral perfections of such a disposal of things that man should come into the world in a depraved ruined state by a propensity to sin and ruin,—whether God has so ordered it that this propensity should lie *in his nature considered alone*, or with relation to *its situation in the universe and its connexion with other parts of the system* to which the creator has united it, *which is* as much of God's ordering as *man's nature itself most simply considered.* p. 151.

Whose—unless it is his own—is the doctrine that "this propensity" lies in the nature of man "considered alone,"

which he thus contrasts with the assumption of his opponents that it does not?

If any further evidence that the meaning of Edwards is what I ascribe to him can be required, it is presented by the following passage in which he closes his refutation of the position assumed by his opponents, by showing that it follows as well from their concessions respecting the constitution and frame of the world, as from the facts which he had advanced, that the tendency to sin is seated in the nature of man alone.

"I would here lastly observe, that our author insists upon it that this lower world where we dwell in its present state 'is as it was when upon a review God pronounced it and all its furniture very good, and that the present form and furniture of the earth is full of God's riches, mercy and goodness, and of the most evident tokens of his love and bounty to the inhabitants.' *If so, there can be no room for such an evasion of the evidences from fact of the universal infallible tendency of man's nature,* to sin and eternal perdition, as that the tendency there is to this issue *does not lie in man's nature,* but in *the general constitution and frame of this earthly world* which God hath made to be the habitation of mankind." p. 152.

Thus obvious is it that he answers the evasion of his opponents "by saying that it asserts that which is false," not "by showing that it amounts to the same thing which he maintains."

The result of the whole then is, that according to his representation, tendency to sin is a fixed cause inherent and seated in the nature of man that infallibly leads him to sin. The question now is whether his representation amounts to the doctrine of physical depravity.

He exhibits the tendency to sin then as a physical attri-

bute. It belongs to—according to his description—and inheres in the nature of man. and that antecedently to the commencement of his moral agency—being the cause that he exerts such actions as he does ;—and therefore at a period when nothing pertains to his nature except its physical attributes. It is itself therefore a physical attribute. It must be regarded as such whether it is supposed to be constituted by the whole of his nature's being what it is—or to be a particular portion of his nature, rather than the result of his whole constitution. It is defined as such as clearly as any of his attributes can be.

It incapacitates man—according to his representation—for exercising holiness.

It is a physical cause inhering in his nature that infallibly leads him to sin in all his moral agency, a cause—to use Edward's language—that is completely "sufficient for the effect, because if it were not sufficient it would not be effectual." In other words it is fraught with an efficiency which no changes in his external circumstances, nor variations in the moral influence exerted on him, can possibly intercept from accomplishing that result; and therefore renders it physically necessary that he should transgress in all his moral actions.

He exhibits it as in itself sinful and deserving of punishment, and as constituting the soul such.

His representation is that it is "*a very evil, depraved and pernicious* propensity,"—a "tendency" that has "*desert*" and "is *pernicious or destructive in a moral sense*," and that

constitutes a "depravity" which is "*odious and pernicious in the highest sense*"—"making it manifest that *the soul of man as it is by nature* is in *a corrupt, fallen and ruined state*."—"*a deplorable and undone state in the highest sense*," and so proving that he *does* "*not come into the world perfectly innocent in the sight of God*, without any *just exposedness to his displeasure*."

Uniting these representations then, his doctrine is that this tendency is a "concreated" "substantial property or attribute of" man's "nature which is in itself sinful and deserving of punishment"—which according to T. R.'s definition is the doctrine of physical depravity.

IV. These views of his doctrine are confirmed by his representation of the change which he supposed was wrought in the nature of man in consequence of the fall.

What he advances on this subject merits a fuller consideration, from the circumstance that T. R. represents it as presenting demonstrative evidence that his doctrine is not that of physical depravity. He says in reference to it,

"Edwards unequivocally *denies* that any such property or attribute as the doctrine of physical depravity asserts, belongs to the nature of man. This he does when he asserts that the only guilt which belongs to man on his first existence, is the imputed guilt of Adam's sin. But what makes it still more strange that any reader of his treatise should ascribe such a doctrine to Edwards is, that he has formally and explicitly stated it as an objection to his doctrine, and denied that it either belongs to his doctrine or can be inferred from it. Nor is this all. He is very explicit in unfolding his views of what the propensity or tendency to sin in man is, and whence it arises, and in this way showing that it is not and cannot be a physical attribute of human nature."

And after quoting a passage in which Edwards states an objection to his doctrine, and commences his reply to it he proceeds,

"It is undeniable that the doctrine of physical depravity is no new invention. It was the grand objection against the doctrine of original sin, to say the least, as early as the times of Taylor and Edwards. It was formally and explicitly alleged by the one as constituting the very doctrine of the orthodox, and as formally and explicitly denied by the other as belonging to this doctrine or following from it. He further affirms," &c. "Now if this is not a denial that man is created with a substantial property or attribute of his nature which is in itself sinful, as direct and explicit as language can furnish, I know not how such denial can be made."

He then in place of quoting from the Treatise "submits the following as an epitomized view of Edwards' theory respecting the origin of sin."

"Man being left as he justly might be on the ground of the apostacy of our race in Adam, without the preventing influence of God, his nature is such in the circumstances in which he is placed, that although he is bound to subordinate the gratification of those natural appetites and passions, which are *in themselves neither sinful nor holy*, to the will and glory of God, he does prefer such gratification and fix his heart upon it as his chief good, and that he does this with such a strength of disposition and purpose that he is sure though against the will of God to abide by this preference of worldly good, and that thus his heart being completely under the dominion of these objects of private gratification, i. e. supremely selfish, is in fact a heart of opposition to God and to his glory. According to this view of Edwards' theory, the direct source of the corruption of the heart lies in that self-love and those natural appetites and passions which were in man in innocence."

"I cannot hesitate to affirm that here is not the remotest semblance of the doctrine of physical depravity."

With what share of accuracy these representations are made is to be determined from the passages which they re-

spect. The chief points which merit consideration obviously are, the nature,—of the objection from which Edwards attempts to vindicate his doctrine,—of the change which his theory represents as occasioned by the fall,—and of the cause to whose influence, according to his account, it is owing that men exert sinful actions. If it shall appear that he does not attempt to vindicate his doctrine from a charge of teaching that the physical nature of man is depraved, but only from the charge of implying that theory of the mode of its becoming so, which his opponent ascribed to it,—that in place of denying he asserted its depravity, and gave a theory of its origin and nature which represents it as a physical attribute—as in itself sinful—and as the cause that men exert sinful actions,—it will then be seen that his doctrine is that of physical depravity.

His opponent, Dr. Taylor, objected to his doctrine of original sin, that it "does in effect charge Him who is the Author of our nature—with being the author of a sinful corruption of nature," and "that it is highly injurious to the God of our nature to believe our nature to be originally corrupted, and that in the worst sense of corruption."

To this objection Edwards commences his reply in the following manner :

"With respect to this I would observe in the first place, that this writer in his handling this grand objection supposes *something to belong* to the doctrine objected against as maintained by the divines whom he is opposing, which does *not* belong to it, nor does follow from it; as particularly he supposes the doctrine of original sin to imply that nature must be corrupted by *some positive influence;* "*something* by

some means or other *infused* into the human nature, some quality or other not from the choice of our minds, but like *a taint tincture or infection*, altering the natural constitution faculties and dispositions of our souls; that sin and evil dispositions are implanted in the fœtus in the womb." Whereas truly our doctrine neither implies nor infers any such thing. *In order to account for a sinful corruption of nature, yea a total native depravity* of the heart of man, there is not the least need of supposing any evil quality *infused, implanted, or wrought*, into the nature of man by any *positive* cause or influence whatsoever either from God or the creature; or of supposing that man is conceived and born with a fountain of evil in his heart such as is any thing properly *positive*." p. 427—28.

The point then here disputed by Edwards, is not at all whether the doctrine of original sin represents the nature of man as corrupt, and in the worst sense of corruption. He makes no pretence whatever of disputing that, but on the contrary—as will be more clearly seen from the whole passage—fully admits and asserts it. It would have been in the highest degree ridiculous to have disputed it. It was not offered as an objection to the doctrine, nor could have been without the greatest absurdity,—for the doctrine itself is—according to Edwards' own definition—that the nature of man *is* corrupt; and Taylor likewise represents "the conveyance of *a corrupt and sinful nature* to Adam's posterity as *the grand point*" which the doctrine asserts.—To have offered its teaching that point therefore as an objection to the doctrine, would have been to have offered *the doctrine itself* as an objection to itself.—The teaching that the nature of man is corrupt, as an objection to teaching that his nature is corrupt.

But in place of that, Taylor's objection is an objection

against *the truth* of the doctrine that the nature of man is corrupt,—on the ground that it presents a representation,—which implies that God is the author of it; and the only thing denied by Edwards is that the doctrine implies *that particular theory* respecting the manner in which that corruption was originated, which Taylor ascribed to it. He says, "this writer in his handling this grand objection supposes *something to belong* to the doctrine objected against—as maintained by the divines whom he is opposing, which does *not* belong to it, nor does *follow* from it;" and *that thing*—according to his representation—*relates solely to the manner in which the corruption of human nature was brought into existence.*

"As particularly," he says, "he supposes the doctrine of original sin to imply that nature must be corrupted by *some positive influence*—something *infused* into the human nature—some quality like *a taint tincture or infection.*" According therefore to Edwards' own account, the only falseness of Taylor's objection consists in its representing the doctrine of original sin as teaching that human nature was corrupted by *the introduction* into it of "*something*" *not originally and properly belonging to it*, which God, after having created that nature, *added on or infused into it by a new creative act;*—and his only reply is, a denial that the doctrine represents the nature of man as corrupted by any such *infusion or addition*, and an affirmation on the contrary that it was by *a subtraction* of something that was at first implanted in him in place of an addition, that his nature

became corrupt—by human nature's being abandoned by all supernatural attributes in consequence of the departure of the Divine Spirit, and left without any thing but what is essentially implied in, necessarily results from, and is inseparably connected with mere human nature. He expresses himself in the following manner:

"I think a little attention to the nature of things will be sufficient to satisfy any impartial considerate inquirer, that *the absence of positive good principles*, and so the withholding of a special divine influence *to impart and maintain* those good principles—leaving the common natural principles of self-love, natural appetite, &c. (which were in man in innocence,) leaving these I say to themselves without the government of superior divine principles, will certainly be followed with *the corruption, yea the total corruption* of the heart, without occasion for any positive influence at all; and that it *was thus indeed that corruption of nature came on Adam* immediately on his fall, and comes on *all his posterity* as sinning in him and falling with him.

"The case with man was plainly this: When God made man at first, he implanted in him two kinds of principles. There was an *inferior* kind, which may be called *natural*, being the principles of mere human nature, such as self-love, with those natural appetites and passions which belong to the nature of man, in which his love to his own liberty honour and pleasure were exercised. These when alone and left to themselves are what the scriptures sometimes call *flesh*. Besides these there were superior principles that were spiritual holy and divine, summarily comprehended in divine love, wherein consisted the spiritual image of God, and man's righteousness and true holiness, which are called in scripture *the divine* nature. These principles may in some sense be called *supernatural*, being (however concreated or connate, yet) such as are above those principles that are essentially implied in, or necessarily resulting from, and inseparably connected with mere human nature, and being such as immediately depend on man's union and communion with God, or divine communications and influences of God's spirit, which though withdrawn and man's nature forsaken of these principles, human nature would be human nature still, man's nature as such being entire without these divine principles which the scripture sometimes calls *spirit*, in contradistinction to *flesh*. These

superior principles were given to possess the throne and maintain an absolute dominion in the heart. The other to be wholly subordinate and subservient. And while things continued thus all things were in excellent order peace and beautiful harmony, and in their proper and perfect state. These divine principles thus reigning were the dignity life happiness and glory of man's nature. When man sinned and broke God's covenant and fell under his curse, these superior principles left his heart. For indeed God then left him: That communion with God on which these principles depended entirely ceased, the Holy Spirit that divine inhabitant forsook the house. Because it would have been utterly improper in itself and inconsistent with the covenant and constitution God had established, that God should still maintain communion with man, and continue by his friendly gracious vital influences to dwell with him and in him after he was become a rebel, and had incurred God's wrath and curse. Therefore immediately the superior divine principles wholly ceased; so light ceases in a room when the candle is withdrawn, and thus man was left in a state of darkness woful corruption and ruin, nothing but flesh without spirit. The inferior principles of self-love and natural appetite which were given only to serve, being alone and left to themselves, of course became reigning principles; having no superior principles to regulate or control them, they became absolute masters of the heart. The immediate consequence of which was, *a fatal catastrophe*, a turning of all things upside down, and the succession of a state of the most odious and dreadful confusion. Man did immediately set up himself and the objects of his private affections and appetites as supreme; and so they took the place of God. These inferior principles are like fire in an house, which we say is a good servant, but a bad master, very useful while kept in its place, but if left to take possession of the whole house soon brings all to destruction. Man's love to his own honour separate interest and private pleasure, which before was wholly subordinate unto love to God and regard to his authority and glory, now disposes and impels him to pursue those objects without regard to God's honour or law, because there is no true regard to these divine things left in him....It were easy to show how every lust and depraved disposition of man's heart would naturally arise from this privative original, if here were room for it. Thus it is easy to give an account how total corruption of heart should follow on man's eating the forbidden fruit, though that was but one act of sin, without God's *Putting* any evil into his heart, or *Im-*

planting any bad principle, or *Infusing* any corrupt taint and *So* becoming the author of depravity. *Only God's withdrawing*, as it was highly proper and necessary that he should, from rebel man, and *Men's Natural Principles Being Left To Themselves, this is sufficient to account for his becoming Entirely Corrupt and Bent on sinning against God.*

" And as *Adam's* nature became corrupt without God's *Implanting or Infusing* any evil thing into his nature, so does the nature of *his posterity.* God dealing with Adam as the head of his posterity, and treating them as one, he deals with his posterity as having all sinned in him. And therefore as God withdrew spiritual communion and his vital gracious influence from the common head, so he withholds the same from all the members as they come into existence; *whereby* they come into the world mere *Flesh* and entirely under the government of natural and inferior principles, and so become wholly corrupt as Adam did.

" Now for God so far to have the disposal of this affair as to withhold those influences without which nature *Will Be Corrupt* is not to be the author of sin." p. 428—431.

It would seem as though the depravity of which he here treats, is too obviously represented as a mere property of the physical constitution, to leave any room for doubt respecting it.

1. He does not, as T. R. affirms, here deny nor pretend to deny that the doctrine of original sin represents the created nature of man as corrupt, nor make that in the least degree a subject of debate. I appeal to the discernment of the reader whether he advances a syllable which in the remotest manner expresses or implies any such denial or question, or which can have any such meaning ascribed to it without rendering it totally contradictory to the whole object of the passage, and its whole strain of thought. On the contrary he expressly asserts the existence of that corruption, and proceeding on it as an established fact, makes

it his whole object to show that his theory of the manner of its coming into existence is not what Dr. Taylor supposed it to be, but just the reverse; and he does it by giving "*an account how*" *that* "*corruption* should follow on man's eating the forbidden fruit" by *a subtraction* of certain attributes which were originally implanted in him, instead of *the addition* to his nature of an evil quality. How could he possibly have denied that his doctrine ascribed corruption to the nature of man, when he had expressly defined it as *asserting* the corruption of human nature, and professedly made it the great object of his work to prove *the existence* of that corruption? It would have been to contradict every thing which he had previously employed himself in endeavouring to demonstrate,—to abandon the whole for which he professed to contend. But let his own language decide the question. He affirms that "in order *to acconnt for*, [not deny,] *a sinful corruption of nature, yea a total native depravity of the heart of man*, there is not the least need of supposing any evil quality *infused* into the nature of man,"—that "*the absence of positive good principles*,—and so *the withholding of a special divine influence to Impart and Maintain those good principles*,—leaving the common natural principles of self-love, natural appetite, &c. to themselves, *will certainly be followed with the corruption, yea the total corruption of the heart*, without occasion for any *positive* influence at all; *and that it was thus that corruption of nature came on Adam immediately on his fall, and comes on all his posterity*." This then is not a

denial that "any such propensity or attribute as the doctrine of physical depravity asserts belongs to the nature of man," but an express declaration that his nature is corrupt, and a formal attempt to account for its becoming so.

2d. He exhibits this corruption as a physical attribute.

He denominates it "a corruption of nature,"—a "native depravity,"—a depravity with which men "come into the world,"—and presents the same representation of it in his theory respecting its origin.

First. He represents the change by which it was brought into existence, as a change simply of man's physical nature. He says nothing whatever of any alteration in his external circumstances as a source of it, nor intimates that they had any agency in giving it being; but describes it as produced entirely by a change wrought in his physical constitution.

Secondly. He represents that change as consisting in the subtraction from the nature of man, of an important portion of the physical attributes, denominated superior principles with which it was originally endowed. Those principles were of course physical attributes. They were "implanted in him when God made" him,—were "concreated or connate," and constituted "the dignity and glory" of his nature, and were as truly therefore attributes of his physical constitution as his inferior principles. No other nature can be ascribed to them without rendering the whole theory a palpable absurdity. If they were not attributes, they must have been *actions*. "Implanted," "concreated or connate" actions! And actions "which

though *withdrawn* and man's nature *forsaken*" of them, "*human nature* would be *human nature still*,—man's nature *as such* being *entire without*" *them!* Man's actions *withdrawing and forsaking him!* Whatever errors Edwards may have fallen into in his theory, no one surely will feel authorized to ascribe to him such palpable nonsense. According to his theory then the change by which man's nature was corrupted, was a change in his physical constitution, and consisted in the expulsion from it of a portion of its physical attributes.

Thirdly. He exhibits the remaining portion of man's nature as left by the eradication of those superior attributes in a corrupt state,—or in other words, as being on their extinction—from its consisting of only such attributes as it did—in itself of course and necessarily corrupt. His representation is, "that corruption of nature came on Adam" by "*the absence*" of those attributes and *the* "*leaving*" of his inferior principles without their "government,"—and that directly, not by the intervention of some *subsequent cause*. It was corrupt in being such as it was left on the extinction of those superior attributes, just as a room is darkened "when the candle is withdrawn," or a body corrupted by the extinction of life,—not by subsequently *corrupting itself* in consequence of its being left such, nor by being corrupted by something *external* to itself. He not only gives no intimation whatever that the latter was the mode of its becoming corrupt, but his representation entirely precludes the ascription to him of such a meaning. His lan-

guage is that the state itself in which he "was left," was "a state of darkness woful corruption and ruin,"—not that *in consequence* of his being left such as he was he *afterwards* became involved in such a state by the intervention of some other cause,—that "*only* God's withdrawing and man's natural principles being left to themselves, is sufficient to account for his becoming entirely corrupt and bent on sinning against God," "without occasion for *any positive influence at all*" "either from *God or the creature*," "and that it was thus that corruption of nature came on Adam, and comes on all his posterity,"—not that *besides* God's withdrawing and the consequent extinction of his superior principles, some other "influence" intervened to constitute his nature corrupt.

That such were his views—were any farther evidence of it necessary—is placed beyond controversy by his saying, that man was left by the loss of his superior principles "*nothing but flesh* without spirit," and that those attributes which constituted his nature after the superior principles were eradicated from it, are by *the scriptures* called *flesh* in contradistinction to spirit, as in a preceding section he interprets that term, when so used by the scriptures, as denoting "*the human nature in a debased and corrupt state*," and says that "the nature of man *as corrupt and sinful* came to be called *flesh*," "because *a corrupt and sinful nature is what properly belongs* to mankind or the race of Adam, *as they are in themselves and as they are by nature*." p. 315. 321.

In all these representations then he exhibits this corrup-

tion as a physical attribute. As the physical constitution was the sole subject of the change by which the corruption was produced, and as the change itself was purely a physical change, the effect—corruption—produced by it must of course have been purely a physical effect. In other words, it was simply as a substance that the nature of man was rendered whatever it was rendered by that change, and therefore as it was constituted corrupt by it, its corruption was an attribute of its substance.

Fourthly. Accordingly he expressly designates the physical nature of man as the subject of this corruption. He represents the inferior or natural principles which he denominates flesh, as "being the principles of mere human nature"—"such as belong to the nature of man," and "are essentially implied in or necessarily resulting from and inseparably connected with mere human nature,"—and in further explanation of his terms adds in a note: "I here use the words *natural and supernatural*, not as epithets of distinction between that which is *concreated or connate*, and that which is extraordinarily introduced afterwards besides the first state of things,—but as distinguishing between what belongs to or flows from that nature which man has merely as man, and those things which are above this, by which one is denominated not only a man, but a truly virtuous holy and spiritual man,—which [the supernatural] though they began in *Adam* as soon as *humanity* began, and are necessary to *the perfection and well being* of the human nature, yet are not essential to *the constitution* of it, or neces-

sary to its *being*, inasmuch as one may have every thing needful to his being *man* exclusively of them." The inferior principles then which are "called *flesh*" because they form "*a corrupt and sinful nature*," are what constitute "*that nature* which man has merely *as man*," are all that belongs to it, and are essential to its constitution and necessary to its being, although they are *not sufficient* for its "*well being*" *and* "*perfection*." His physical nature,—not his actions or condition—is thus in the most explicit manner represented as the subject of this corruption.

Finally. This is fully demonstrated by the fact, that here—as in his discussion respecting tendency and in every other part of his Treatise—he exhibits this corruption as *the cause* that men exert *sinful actions*, and therefore as existing antecedently to the exertion of those actions. The "*fatal catastrophe, a turning of all things upside down and the succession* of a state of the most odious and dreadful confusion,"—that is, man's setting "up himself and the objects of his private affections and appetites as supreme" in "the place of God,"—was "*the consequence*" of his being left in "a state of darkness woful corruption and ruin, "nothing but flesh without spirit;"—and his nature—consisting only of inferior principles that "are like fire in a house which we say is a good servant but a bad master—very useful while kept in its place, but if left to take possession of the whole house soon brings all to destruction,"—"*now impels* him to pursue" "his own honour, separate interest and private pleasure," "without regard to God's

honour or law, *because*"—the superior principles being eradicated—" *there is no true regard* to these divine things *left* in him." As then this corruption is not a quality of actions, but on the contrary exists antecedently to the exertion of sinful actions, and is the cause of their being exerted—it must of course belong to the physical constitution and constitute one of its attributes.

3. He here—as in the other portions of the Treatise which have been quoted—exhibits this depravity of nature as in itself sinful. He expressly calls it " *a sinful* corruption of nature," and also represents it as such in denominating the nature of man *flesh*, which he had antecedently explained as meaning " the nature of man *as corrupt and sinful.*"

4. His theory exhibits God as the author of this corruption of human nature, as much as that did which was ascribed to him by his opponent. If—as he represents—God creates the physical nature of man, and it is corrupt, it is surely too clear to admit of debate that he is the author of its corruption.

The result of the whole then is, that in place of unequivocally denying in this passage the corruption of human nature, he expressly asserts it and employs himself in delineating its nature and manner of coming into existence, and his doctrine is—that it is a physical attribute—that it is the effect of God's agency—that it is in itself sinful—and that it is the cause that men exert sinful actions—which is the doctrine of physical depravity.

V. He exhibits the same views in his doctrine respecting created dispositions.

He expresses it in the following language :

" Human nature must be created with some dispositions ; a disposition to relish some things as good and amiable, and to be averse to other things as odious and disagreeable ; otherwise it must be without any such thing as inclination or will, it must be perfectly indifferent, without preference without choice or aversion, toward any thing as agreeable or disagreeable. But if it had any concreated dispositions at all, they must be either *right* or *wrong*, either agreeable or disagreeable to the nature of things. If man had at first the highest relish of those things that were most excellent and beautiful, a disposition to have the quickest and highest delight in those things that were most worthy of it, then his dispositions were *morally right and amiable*, and never can be decent and excellent *in a higher sense.* But if he had a disposition to love most those things that were inferior and less worthy, then his dispositions were *vicious.* And it is evident there can be no medium between these." " It is agreeable to the sense of the minds of men in all nations and ages, not only that *the fruit or effect of* a good choice is virtuous, but *the good choice itself* from whence that effect proceeds ; yea and not only so, but also *the antecedent good disposition temper or affection* of mind from whence proceeds that good choice—is virtuous. This is the general notion, not that principles derive their goodness from *actions*, but that actions derive their goodness from *the principles* whence they proceed ; and so that the act of choosing that which is good, is no farther virtuous than it proceeds from *a good principle or virtuous disposition of mind.* Which supposes that *a virtuous disposition* of mind may be *before a virtuous act of choice*, and that therefore it is not necessary that there should first be *thought, reflection and choice* before there can be *any virtuous disposition.* If the choice be first before the existence of a good disposition of heart, what signifies that choice? There can according to our natural notions be no virtue in a choice which proceeds from no virtuous principle, but from mere self-love ambition or some animal appetite ; and therefore a virtuous *temper* of mind may be *before a good act of choice*, as a tree may be before the fruit, and the fountain before the stream which proceeds from it." p. 259, 260. 267–8.

His doctrine in these passages is surely too obviously that of physical depravity to admit of controversy. He teaches,

1. That it is necessary that human nature should be created with a disposition in order to its being physically capable of love hatred or any voluntary agency,—that it is as much "a contradiction to the nature of things that it should act without a disposition, as that there should be fruit without a tree—a stream without a fountain—or in other words—an effect without a cause.

2. He of course therefore represents this disposition as *the cause* by which all the moral *actions* which men exert are produced, and its *nature* as the cause of *the nature of the actions* to which it gives birth. As the nature of man would without this disposition be incapable of moral agency, it of course constitutes his *capacity* for the exertion of moral actions.

3. It is indubitably therefore a physical attribute. His capacity for moral agency assuredly has its foundation in his physical nature, and as this is what constitutes that capacity it must be an attribute of that nature. Moreover, it being the cause of *the moral actions* which men exert—it of course exists *antecedently* to the exertion of any of those actions, when nothing pertains to the mind but its physical nature, and must therefore be one of its physical attributes. It is not in any sense an act or operation of human nature, nor any effect produced in it, nor any relation or external circumstance, but is a property with which

the soul is created, and one of its most important properties, and belongs to and inheres in its essence, and that is to be a physical attribute.

4. It has a moral character. It is either good or evil, right or wrong—holy or sinful, "in the highest sense," in precisely the same sense that actions are. It is virtuous or vicious antecedently to the exertion of any act, either of the voluntary powers or the understanding, and is the thing and the only thing which imparts a moral quality to actions. They are holy or sinful no farther and for no other reason than that they proceed from a holy or sinful disposition.

5. As it is a created attribute, God of course is the author of it.

6. He made it—as he himself says—the great object of his Treatise to prove, "that the heart of man," as he is now created, "is of a corrupt and evil disposition." This evil disposition is of course what he in other places denominates a sinful tendency and propensity, and which he endeavoured to prove to be inherent in the nature of man.

His doctrine then in this passage is precisely what T. R. represents as the doctrine of physical depravity—"that there is concreated with man a substantial attribute of his nature that is in itself sinful and deserving of punishment."

VI. He presents the same views of human nature in his theory respecting the imputation of Adam's sin.

His views on this topic are exhibited by T. R. as of the utmost importance in this controversy. He represents them as furnishing the only key by which all that phraseology of

Edwards which is imagined to imply the doctrine of physical depravity can be properly interpreted, and intimates that it is only in consequence of their being carelessly overlooked, that Edwards has been thought to teach that doctrine! This is surely an extraordinary representation. Edwards who took so much care to explain himself by formal definitions, and thought and wrote with so much energy perspicuity and logical accuracy, advanced three hundred pages in this controversy before he presented his reader with any key by which the meaning of the most important terms in the discussion can be ascertained! It is scarcely imagined the readers of the Treatise have generally entertained such impressions respecting it, or that they will be easily convinced that such were the views of Edwards himself. If he had regarded his doctrine of imputation as the only key by which it could be discerned what it was his object to teach in the Treatise, it would have been very natural to express that conviction, and point out the manner in which his views on this topic so seriously affect what he had previously advanced. He has not however presented us with any thing of that kind. It would have afforded gratification too if T. R. entertaining such impressions of the importance of this topic, had aided our discernment of the truth of his statement, by showing *how* Edwards' views of imputation are at all to modify the meaning of the language he employs in the rest of the Treatise,—or to prove that that language was not used to denote what it plainly and naturally means, and is sup-

posed to mean by those of Edwards' readers who he thinks "are less careful than they should be,"—and also by informing us how *his own conclusions*, respecting Edwards' doctrine of original sin, *follow* from what Edwards advances on the subject of imputation. He has not however favoured us with any thing of that kind. It is proper that the reader should be presented with what T. R. says on this subject, that it may be seen what kind of discussion he thought proper to give to a topic of so much importance in the controversy. After stating that "Edwards maintains that man in the state in which he comes into the world, is sinful and justly exposed to divine wrath," and that "he goes even farther than this, and speaks of the guilt arising from the first existing of a depraved disposition," he adds,

"In this and similar language of his work lies I apprehend the principal ground of the misapprehensions of this writer. Some of his readers, less careful than they should be, by overlooking his peculiar views respecting the imputation of Adam's sin, have been unable to put any other meaning upon some of his phraseology, than that which exhibits man as personally guilty at his first existence. Now to the real meaning of this phraseology of Edwards, if I mistake not, *the key can be found only in his views of imputation.* While then it is undeniable that he maintains that *guilt and desert of punishment* pertain to man and even to *his depraved disposition on his first existence*, still the question is, in what does this guilt consist according to this writer? Concerning the true answer to this inquiry he has left us at no loss. For he most unequivocally and abundantly affirms that the guilt and the *only* guilt which belongs to man on his first existence, is the imputed guilt of Adam's sin."

Were such however the fact, it accomplishes nothing toward determining the controversy, until it is ascertained what he means by the guilt of Adam's sin, and by the impu-

tation of that guilt—a subject on which T. R. has not thought proper to bestow any attention; and consequently has not—granting all which he claims Edwards has affirmed—achieved any thing toward demonstrating that he does not teach the doctrine of physical depravity in his views of imputation. After presenting extracts from what Edwards advances on that topic, he sums up what he regards him as affirming, and draws his conclusion from the whole in the following manner:

"Here then our author maintaining the personal identity according to divine constitution of Adam and his posterity, declares that men do not come into the world with *a double* guilt, one the guilt of Adam's sin, and the other the guilt of having a corrupt heart, that the guilt which a man has upon his soul at his first existence is *one and simple*—viz. the guilt of the original apostacy; that the inspired declaration all have sinned, in respect to infants can be true *only* of their sinning by Adam's sin; that infants can be sinners in no other way but by Adam's transgression; and that they are not capable of any moral action at all But how could Edwards without falling into an inconsistency too gross to be imputed to him, maintain that the *only* guilt which belongs to man when he comes into the world is the imputed guilt of Adam's sin, and yet maintain that he is the subject of a natural propensity which is *in itself* sinful and deserving of punishment?"

A truly summary method of settling controversies, to make the assumption that an author's meaning is just what suits one's purpose, and then dash away on it in the confidence of victory, without stopping to inquire whether it is sustained at all by facts or probabilities,—or does not stand in obvious contradiction to both, and involve a grosser inconsistency than it imputes to the opposite interpretation of his language! How does it appear from T. R.'s account of what "Edwards declares," that he does not expressly and

formally teach the doctrine of physical depravity in his theory of imputation? Suppose it to turn out that Edwards represents the sin of Adam as consisting—not in the external act of eating the forbidden fruit—but in his having *a disposition* which led him to that act, and which is in itself sinful:—that the way in which his posterity sin by him—is not at all by his guilt's being transferred to them—but by their having in consequence of their constituted union with him a disposition which like his is fully sufficient for and amounts to the commission of the same external sin, and is therefore like his in itself sinful:—and finally that the imputation of his sin to them does not consist at all in the transferrence of his sin or guilt to them—but simply in the imputation to them of their own sinful disposition as implying and amounting to the same thing as his sin;—will it then involve too gross an inconsistency to impute to him, to represent him as teaching the doctrine of physical depravity in his views of imputation? That such is his theory will be seen from the following quotations:

"I think it would go far toward directing us to the more clear and distinct conceiving and right stating of this affair, were we steadily to bear this in mind, that God in each step of his proceeding with Adam in relation to the covenant or constitution established with him, looked on his posterity as being *one with him*. And though he dealt more immediately with Adam, yet it was as *the head* of the whole body, and *the root* of the whole tree; and in his proceedings with him he dealt with all the branches as if they had been then existing in their root.

"From which it will follow that *both guilt or exposedness to punishment*, and also *depravity of heart* came upon Adam's *posterity, just as they came upon him*; as much as if he and they had all *co-existed* like a tree with many branches, allowing only for the difference necessarily

resulting from the place Adam stood in as head or root of the whole, and being first and most immediately dealt with and most immediately acting and suffering. Otherwise it is as if in every step of proceeding, *every alteration in the root* had been attended at the same instant with *the same steps and alterations* throughout the whole tree in *each individual branch.* I think this will naturally follow on the supposition of there being a constituted oneness or identity of Adam and his posterity in this affair.

" Therefore I am humbly of opinion that if any have supposed the children of Adam to come into the world with *a double guilt*—one the guilt of Adam's sin—another the guilt arising from their having a corrupt heart, they have not so well conceived of the matter. The guilt a man has upon his soul at his first existence is *one and simple*, viz. the guilt of the original apostacy—the guilt of the sin by which the species first rebelled against God...This and the guilt arising from the first corruption or depraved disposition of the heart, are not to be looked upon as *two things distinctly* imputed and charged upon men in the sight of God. Indeed the guilt that arises from the corruption of the heart as it remains *a confirmed principle* and appears in its consequent operations, *is a distinct and additional guilt.* But the guilt arising from *the first existing of a depraved disposition* in Adam's posterity, I apprehend is *not* distinct from their guilt of *Adam's first sin.* For so it was not in Adam himself. The first evil disposition or inclination of the heart of Adam to sin, was not properly distinct from his first act of sin, but was included in it. The external act he committed was no otherwise his than as his heart was in it, or as that action proceeded from the wicked inclination of his heart. Nor was the guilt he had *double* as for two distinct sins—one the wickedness of his heart and will in that affair—another the wickedness of the external act *caused* by his heart. His guilt was *all* truly from the act of his *inward man*, exclusive of which the motions of his body were no more than the motions of any lifeless instrument. His sin consisted in wickedness of *heart* fully sufficient *for*, and entirely amounting *to* all that appeared in the act he committed.

The depraved disposition of Adam's heart is to be considered two ways: 1. As the first rising of an evil inclination in his heart, *exerted* in his first act of sin, and *the ground* of the complete transgression. 2. An evil disposition of heart continuing afterwards as *a confirmed principle* that came by God's forsaking him, which was *a punishment* of

his first transgression. This confirmed corruption, by its remaining and continued operation brought additional guilt on his soul.

"And in like manner depravity of heart is to be considered two ways in Adam's *posterity*. The first existing of a corrupt disposition in their hearts, is not to be looked upon as sin belonging to them distinct from their participation of Adam's first sin;—it is as it were the extended pollution of that sin through the whole tree, by virtue of the constituted union of the branches with the root;—or *the inherence of the sin* of that head of the species in the members, in the consent and concurrence of the hearts of the members with the head in that first act, (which may be without God's being the author of sin, about which I have spoken in the former chapter.) But *the depravity of nature* remaining *an established principle* in the heart of a child of Adam, and as exhibited in after operations, is a consequence and punishment of the first apostacy *Thus Participated*, and brings *New Guilt*. The first being of an evil disposition in the heart of a child of Adam whereby he is disposed to approve of the sin of his first father as fully as he himself approved of it when he committed it, or so far as to imply a full and perfect consent of heart to it, I think is not to be looked upon as a consequence of the imputation of that first sin, any more than the full consent of Adam's own heart in the act of sinning, which was not consequent on the imputation of his sin to himself, but rather *prior* to it in the order of nature. Indeed *the derivation* of the evil disposition to the hearts of Adam's posterity, or rather *the coexistence* of the evil disposition implied in Adam's first rebellion, in the root and branches, is a consequence of *the union* that the wise author of the world has established between Adam and his posterity, but not properly a consequence of *the imputation of his sin;* nay rather *antecedent* to it, as it was in *Adam himself*. The first depravity of heart and the imputation of that sin are both the consequences of that established union; but yet in such order, that the evil disposition is *first*, and the charge of guilt *consequent*, as it was in the case of Adam himself.

Note.—My meaning in the whole of what has been here said may be illustrated thus. Let us suppose that Adam and all his posterity had been, through a law of nature established by the Creator, united to him something as the branches of a tree are united to the root, or the members of the body to the head, so as to constitute as it were one complex person, or one moral whole, so that by the law of union there should have been a communion and co-existence in acts and affections, all jointly participating, and all concurring as one whole in the dispo-

sition and action of the head, as we see in the body natural the whole body is affected as the head is affected, and the whole body concurs as the head acts. Now in this case the hearts of all the branches of mankind by the constitution of nature and law of union would have been affected just as the heart of Adam their common root was affected. When the heart of the root by a full disposition committed the first sin, the hearts of all the branches would have concurred; and when the root in consequence of this became guilty, so would all the branches; and when the heart of the root as a punishment of the sin committed, was forsaken of God, in like manner would it have fared with all the branches; and when the heart of the root in consequence of this was confirmed in *permanent depravity*, the case would have been the same with all the branches; and as *new guilt* on the soul of Adam would have been consequent on this, so also would it have been with his moral branches. And thus *all things* with relation to *evil disposition, guilt, pollution and depravity*, would exist in the same *order and dependence* in *each branch* as in the *root*. Now difference of the *time* of existence does not at all *hinder* things succeeding in the same order, any more than difference of *place* in *a co-existence* of time."

"So root and branches being one according to God's wise constitution, the case in fact is, that by virtue of this oneness, answerable changes or effects through all the *branches* co-exist with the changes in the *root;* consequently *an evil disposition* exists in *the hearts of Adam's posterity, Equivalent* to that which was exerted in his *own heart* when he ate the forbidden fruit."

"But now the grand objection is against *the reasonableness* of such a constitution by which Adam and his posterity should be looked upon as *one*, and dealt with accordingly in an affair of such infinite consequence; so that if Adam sinned *they must necessarily be made sinners* by his disobedience, and *come into existence* with the *same depravity of disposition*, and *be looked upon and treated* as though they were *partakers* with Adam in his act of sin." p. 437–442.

I cannot but think that "some of his readers" on advancing through these passages, will find themselves "unable to put any other meaning upon some of his phraseology, than that which exhibits man as personally guilty at his first existence," without being "less careful than they should

be," or "overlooking his peculiar views respecting the imputation of Adam's sin." One can scarcely wish for more ample materials to establish a controverted point, than are here furnished to demonstrate that the doctrine of Edwards is what I ascribe to him. Let us collect the several positions which he advances, and see to what conclusion they carry us respecting his doctrine.

1. He teaches that Adam had *a* "*depraved disposition* of heart," which was *the cause* of his eating the forbidden fruit. He represents it as "*exerted* in his *first act of sin*, and *the ground* of the complete transgression," and as that which "*caused* the wickedness of the external act."

2. He represents this disposition as *in itself sinful.* He teaches that there is "guilt arising from *the first existing* of a depraved disposition," and that its "continuing afterwards as *a confirmed principle* brought *additional* guilt on his soul,"—and that by its being *in itself sinful*—not merely by its causing him to exert a sinful external act; for he affirms that there was not a "wickedness of the external act caused by his heart," besides "the wickedness of his heart," and that his "guilt was all from his inward man," and "consisted in wickedness of heart sufficient *for* that act."

3. Accordingly he exhibits Adam's *first guilt* as consisting in his having *a depraved disposition.* He endeavours to prove that "the guilt arising from the first existing of a depraved disposition in Adam's posterity, is not distinct

from their guilt of Adam's first sin," by the fact that "so it was not in Adam himself." But if the guilt arising from the first existing of his depraved disposition was not distinct from the guilt of his first sin, then of course the guilt of the first existing of that disposition was the guilt of his first sin. Accordingly he proceeds: "The first evil disposition or inclination of the heart of Adam to sin was not properly distinct from his first act of sin, but was included in it,—nor was the guilt he had *double* as for *two distinct sins*, one the wickedness of his *heart and will* in that affair, another the wickedness of *the external act caused* by his heart." To which then did *all* the guilt belong? "His guilt was *all truly* from the act of his inward man." What then is that inward man, his volition or depraved disposition which caused his volition? "His sin consisted in *wickedness of heart—fully sufficient For and entirely amounting To* all that appeared in the act he committed," and not therefore in the act itself. His first guilt then consisted entirely in his depraved disposition which caused his external act; and this is obviously in accordance with his theory respecting concreated dispositions, that principles do not derive their moral character from actions, but that actions derive theirs from the principles from which they proceed, so that an act of choice is no farther virtuous or vicious, than is the principle from which it proceeds, and consequently that virtue and vice exist in the mind antecedently to "thought reflection and choice."

4. He teaches that in consequence of God's forsaking

Adam, his depraved disposition continued afterwards "a confirmed principle," and by "its remaining brought additional guilt on his soul."

His doctrine then in regard to Adam is—that a depraved disposition existed in his mind antecedently to his eating the forbidden fruit, which was the cause of his committing that act, constituted his guilt in it, and was in itself sinful, bringing guilt on his soul at its first existing, and additional guilt at every subsequent period of its existence; and what is this but the doctrine of physical depravity?

5. He teaches that all Adam's posterity by virtue of a union which God has established between him and them, are affected in consequence of his fall just as he was, so that "all things with relation to evil disposition, guilt, pollution and depravity, exist" in them "in the same order and dependence as in" him. They therefore are created with such a depraved disposition as he possessed, "whereby they are disposed to approve of the sin of their first father as fully as he himself approved of it when he committed it"—a disposition which, like that in which "his sin consisted," is "fully sufficient for and entirely amounting to all that appeared in the act he committed,"—is in itself sinful and brings guilt on their souls at its first existing,—prevents their enjoying the influences of the Divine Spirit and consequently becomes a "confirmed" and "permanent depravity,"—is the cause that they exert sinful actions, and finally brings additional guilt on them at every subsequent period as well as at the commencement of its existence.

6. He teaches that "their participation of Adam's first sin" consists simply in their having a depraved disposition like that in which his first sin consisted. He does not as some have taught represent that they are partakers of Adam's first sin, *by that sin's being transferred to them*, and thereby becoming their personal sin,—nor as others have held, *by the guilt of that sin's* being transferred to them so as to become their personal guilt, and which it would seem T. R. regarded him as teaching, as he says Edwards "most unequivocally and abundantly affirms that the guilt and the *only* guilt which belongs to man on his first existence, is *the imputed guilt* of Adam's first sin," in distinction from his personal guilt. Edwards however neither in the passages in relation to which T. R. makes this extraordinary declaration, nor in any others in the Treatise, affirms any thing of that kind, nor advances any thing that can with the least propriety be considered as in the remotest manner indicating it. I feel no apprehension that any one at all competent on the score of intelligence and candour to ascertain what his meaning is, will on examination find any just occasion to question the correctness of this statement. On the contrary he "most unequivocally and abundantly affirms" that "their participation of Adam's first sin" and "the only guilt which belongs" to them on their first existence, lies in their *depraved disposition*, as is seen from the following considerations.

First. He denies that "the children of Adam come into the world" with the guilt of Adam's sin, *in addition* to "the

guilt arising from their having a corrupt heart." He says "if any have supposed the children of Adam to come into the world with a *double* guilt, *one* the guilt of Adam's sin, *another* the guilt arising from their having a corrupt heart, they have not so well conceived of the matter." But he represents that they "come into existence" with a "guilt arising from their depraved disposition." That therefore is the only guilt with which they come into the world.

Secondly. Accordingly he denies that there is any distinction between the guilt of their corrupt disposition, and their guilt of Adam's sin. "The guilt of the sin by which the species first rebelled against God," "and the guilt arising from the first corruption or depraved disposition of the heart, are not to be looked upon as *two things distinctly* imputed and charged upon men in the sight of God." They surely then are but one and identically the same thing, and as the first existing of their depraved disposition brings guilt upon them, that of course and that alone is their guilt of Adam's first sin. Accordingly after stating that there is a difference between the guilt arising from the first existing of their corruption of heart, and its existing at a subsequent period as a confirmed principle, he adds, "but the guilt arising from the first existing of a depraved disposition in Adam's posterity I apprehend is *not* distinct from their guilt of Adam's first sin, for so it was not in Adam." If then *no distinction* whatever exists between them, there surely is no difference, and therefore "their guilt of Adam's first sin" is nothing but the guilt which their depraved disposition brings on them at its first existence.

Thirdly. He explicitly affirms that the only guilt which they have on their souls at their first existing, is the guilt of the sin by which the species first rebelled against God,—that that sin consisted in depravity of disposition,—and therefore that the guilt of a depraved disposition is the only guilt which they have on their souls at their first existence. "The guilt a man has upon his soul at his first existence is *one and simple*, viz. the guilt of *the original apostacy*, the guilt of *the sin by which the species first rebelled against God.*" In what then did that original apostacy consist,—in Adam's depraved disposition or in his eating the forbidden fruit? "His sin consisted in *wickedness of heart*, fully sufficient *for* and entirely amounting *to* all that appeared in the act he committed,"—and not therefore in that act itself. If therefore his first sin consisted in his depraved disposition—and the only guilt his children have on their souls at their first existence is the guilt of the first sin—then the only guilt which belongs to them on their first existence, is the guilt of a depraved disposition.

Fourthly. But he expressly declares that the sin of Adam inhering in them, *is* the first existing of a corrupt disposition in their hearts. "The first existing of a corrupt disposition in their hearts, is not to be looked upon as a sin belonging to them *distinct* from their participation of *Adam's first sin.* It is as it were *the extended pollution of that sin through the whole tree*, by virtue of the constituted union of the branches with the root,—or *the Inherence* of the sin of that head of the species in the members, in the consent and concur-

rence of the hearts of the members with the head in that first act." The sin of Adam then *inhering* in them, is nothing more nor less than the first existing of their own corrupt disposition of heart.

7. In accordance with this, he denominates their corrupt disposition a participation of Adam's first sin, simply because it is such a disposition as that in which his first sin consisted—"fully amounting to all that appeared in the act he committed." He says "the first existing of a corrupt disposition in their hearts....is the inherence of the sin of that head of the species in the members, *in the consent and concurrence of the hearts* of the members with the head in that first act." It is called *his* sin then only because it entirely *resembles* his, and is adequate to lead them as his did him to acts of rebellion. Accordingly he quotes as to his "purpose" the following passage from Stapfer, which presents the same representation:

"It is objected against the imputation of Adam's sin, that we never *committed* the same sin with Adam, neither in number nor kind. I answer we should distinguish here between *the physical act itself* which Adam committed, and *the morality* of the action and *consent* to it. If we have respect only to *the external act*, to be sure it must be confessed that Adam's posterity did not put forth their hands to the forbidden fruit; *in which sense* that act of transgression and that fall of Adam cannot be physically one with the sin of his posterity. But if we consider *the morality* of the action and *what consent* there is to it, it is *altogether to be maintained* that his posterity *committed the same sin* both in number and in kind, *inasmuch* as they are to be looked upon as *consenting* to it. For where there is *consent* to a sin, there *the same sin is committed.* Seeing therefore that Adam with all his posterity constitute but one moral person, and are united in the same covenant, and are transgressors of *the same law*, they are also to be looked upon as having *in*

a moral estimation committed *the same transgression* of the law, both in number and in kind. Therefore this reasoning avails nothing against the righteous imputation of the sin of Adam to all mankind, or to the whole moral person that is consenting to it. And for the reason mentioned we may rather argue thus: The sin of the posterity on account of their *consent* and *the moral view* in which they are to be taken is *the same* with the sin of Adam not only in *kind* but in *number; therefore* the sin of Adam is rightfully imputed to his posterity." p. 441.

No doubt surely can exist that it is here "most unequivocally and abundantly" affirmed that the posterity of Adam were regarded as committing his first sin or participating it, simply on account of their having a depravity of disposition precisely like that in which his sin consisted, "fully sufficient for and entirely amounting to all that appeared in the act he committed," and implying a "full and perfect consent of heart to it."

8. As he represents their participation of Adam's first sin as consisting in nothing else than their having a corrupt disposition resembling his, so he exhibits the *imputation* to them of his sin as consisting simply in the imputation to them of *their own corrupt disposition.* He affirms that "all things with relation to evil disposition, guilt, pollution and depravity, exist in the same order and *dependence* in each branch as in the root." But Adam's guilt by his own account depended entirely on his depraved disposition,—theirs of course then depends entirely on theirs. Accordingly he says, "the evil disposition is *first*" in them, "and the charge of guilt *consequent*, as it was in the case of Adam himself;"—and also quotes with approbation the following passage from Stapfer: "The imputation of Adam's first

sin consists in nothing else than this, that his posterity are viewed as in the same place with their father, and are *like* him."

But in the following passage he asserts it in so many words:

"There is no sure ground to conclude that it must be an absurd and impossible thing for the race of mankind truly to partake of the sin of the first apostacy, so as that this in reality and propriety shall become *their sin*—by virtue of *a real union* between the root and branches of the world of mankind truly and properly availing to such a consequence (established by the author of the whole system of the universe, to whose establishments are owing all propriety and reality of union in any part of that system,) and by virtue of *the full consent of the hearts* of Adam's posterity to that first apostacy;—and *therefore* the sin of the apostacy is *not* theirs merely because God *Imputes* it to them, but it is *Truly and Properly* theirs, and on *that Ground* God imputes it to them." p. 458.

Probably "some of his readers" without being "less careful than they should be," or overlooking his peculiar views respecting the imputation of Adam's sin," will also find themselves "unable to put any other meaning on some of his phraseology" in this passage, "than that which exhibits man as personally guilty at his first existence."

9. When he represents that infants can "be sinners in no other way than by virtue of Adam's transgression, having never in their own persons actually sinned as Adam did," his meaning is,—in accordance with what has been already seen,—that inasmuch as they have never like him exerted an *external act* that violates the law of God, they can be sinners only by being of that *depraved disposition* in which his sin consisted, and which Edwards denominates

"*the inherence*" of his sin in them. That passage therefore, with every other of the same kind, concurs with all those which we have before examined in exhibiting "man as personally guilty at his first existence."

The result of the whole then is, that instead of finding any "key in his views of imputation," which is to enable us "to put any other meaning upon his phraseology than that which exhibits man as personally guilty at his first existence," it is found that the doctrine that "man is personally guilty at his first existence," is identically what constitutes "his view of imputation,"—the soul and substance of all he teaches on the subject.

"I cannot hesitate to affirm" not only that here is "the doctrine of physical depravity," but that there "is not the remotest semblance" of any thing else. Here is no semblance of the doctrine that any sin or guilt is imputed to the posterity of Adam, but what truly and properly belongs to them antecedently to and independently of the imputation, any more than there was to Adam himself; nor any but what inheres in and belongs to their created nature,—it being expressly asserted that the sin which God imputes to them is not theirs *because* he imputes it to them, but that he imputes it to them because "it is *truly and properly theirs*," and that "all things with relation to evil disposition, guilt, pollution and depravity, exist in the same order and *dependence*" in them as in him. His depraved disposition depended for its existence on God's agency, and so also does theirs. The imputation to him of his disposition

as sinful depended on its being truly and properly such, and so also does the imputation to them of theirs. And as God's withholding his Spirit from Adam depended on his guilt, so likewise does his withholding his Spirit from them depend on theirs. In a word the reason and dependence of each of these successive events are so plainly represented as precisely the same in relation to them as to him, that it is as obvious and total a misrepresentation of Edwards' doctrine to affirm that he does not exhibit the posterity of Adam as personally guilty at their first existence, as it would be to affirm that he does not exhibit Adam himself as personally guilty of what God imputes to him.

We have thus seen that Edwards taught the doctrine of physical depravity in his reasonings from the sinful actions of men,—in his representations respecting the influence of the fall on the human constitution,—in his theory relative to concreated dispositions,—and in his views of imputation —in other words, in all the philosophical part of his Treatise.

VII. He also regarded it as the doctrine of revelation as well as of philosophy, and represents the scriptures as expressly inculcating it. He says,

"Original depravity may well be argued from wickedness being often spoken of in scripture. as a thing belonging to *the race* of mankind, and as if it were *a property* of the species." "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent. It is so *remarkably*,—as the very *nature* of a serpent is poison. Serpents are poisonous as soon as they come into the world; they derive a poisonous nature by their generation." "Those words of Christ giving a reason to Nicodemus why we must be born again, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is*

born of the spirit is spirit, have not without good reason been produced by divines, as a proof of the doctrine of original sin,—supposing that by *flesh* here is meant, *the human nature in a debased and corrupt state.*" "In the first birth or generation we are *created*, or brought into *existence*, it is then *the whole man* first receives *being*. *The soul* is then formed, and then our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made, being wrought by our Creator." "And from what the scripture most clearly teaches, it is certain that *every man is born* into the world in a state of *moral pollution.*" p. 301. 308. 315. 419, 420.

Man is thus expressly declared to be created in his first birth, and to be born "in a debased and corrupt state"—"a state of moral pollution."

"And when it is said—"ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit," it is most manifest that by the flesh here the apostle means *some nature* that is *corrupt and of an evil tendency;* and directly opposite to the law and holy nature of God." "And it is plain that hereby *being and walking after or according to the flesh*, is meant the same thing as being and walking according to *a corrupt and sinful nature.*" "When Christ says, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," he represents the flesh, not merely as *a quality*,—for it would be incongruous to speak of a quality as a thing *born*,—it is *a person or man* that is born. Therefore *man* as in his *whole nature corrupt* is called *flesh.*" "One thing is particularly observable in that discourse of the apostle in the 7th and 8th of Romans, in which he so often uses the term *flesh* as opposite to *spirit*, which as well as many other things in his discourse, makes it *plain* that by *flesh*, he means *something In Itself Corrupt and Sinful*, and that is that he expressly calls it *Sinful flesh.*" p. 317, 318.

Here then *flesh* means "*something in itself corrupt and sinful;*" and the thing which it denotes is, "man that is born," which is in a preceding passage defined to be "the whole of man" when God creates him. Man's nature then as God creates it is "*in itself corrupt and sinful.*" It is recommended to T. R. to pause and revolve this passage until fully apprised of its existence and meaning, and to

contrast it with the representation which he has given of Edwards' doctrine. From his frequent repetition of the phrase "*in itself sinful*," it would seem that he imagines on the one hand that nothing can amount to an expression of the doctrine of physical depravity but the solemn application of that language to the created nature of man,—and on the other, that that language "most unequivocally and abundantly" expresses it. As therefore he has it here, it is hoped he will allow himself to be convinced that the doctrine is at least in one instance taught in the Treatise, even "if he cannot hesitate to affirm" that there "is not the remotest semblance" of it in any thing else which Edwards has advanced.

"The apostle by *flesh* does not mean any thing that is *Innocent and Good In Itself*,—that only needs to be *restrained* and kept in *proper bounds*, but something *altogether evil*, which is to be *destroyed*, and not *merely restrained*." "Here if it should be inquired *how corruption or depravity in general, or the nature of man as corrupt and sinful*, came to be called *flesh*, and not only *that* corruption which consists in inordinate bodily appetites, I think what the apostle says in the last cited place, "are ye not carnal and walk as *men*," leads us to the true reason. It is because *a corrupt and sinful nature* is what *properly belongs* to mankind or the race of Adam, *as they are in themselves and as they are by nature*." p. 319. 321.

We are thus told that the nature of man as corrupt and sinful is denominated flesh, because it is in reality corrupt and sinful.

Let us now contrast this representation from his own pen of his views of that which is denominated flesh, with the account of them given by T. R. in his "epitomized view of Edwards' theory respecting the origin of sin."

"Man being left without the preventing influence of God, his nature is such in the circumstances in which he is placed, that although he is bound to subordinate the gratification of "those natural appetites and passions" which are in themselves *neither sinful nor holy*," &c. Edwards in the same sentence of the passage epitomized from which the phrase "those natural appetites and passions" is quoted, says they "belong to the nature of man, and when alone and left to themselves are what the scriptures sometimes call *flesh*." Here then unfortunately is much more of transmutation than epitome. "Those natural appetites and passions, which" when he speaks for himself Edwards says "the scriptures call *flesh*," and call them so because they are in themselves corrupt and sinful, when T. R. speaks for him by epitome, have entirely lost that "infinitely dreadful nature," and become "neither sinful nor holy." It were well were this the only alchymical exploit of the kind in T. R.'s representation of Edwards' views of original sin.

It were easy to add many other passages from Edwards in which he represents the scriptures as teaching, "that what is born in the first birth of man, is nothing but *man* as he is *of himself* without any thing divine in him—*depraved*, *debased*, *sinful*, *ruined man*, utterly unfit to enter into the kingdom of God, and *incapable* of the spiritual divine happiness of that kingdom," p. 322.—But these surely—to all who are not prepared to deny that that doctrine can be expressed in any language whatever—must furnish conclusive

evidence that Edwards' doctrine is the doctrine of physical depravity.

The fact is however in T. R.'s estimation quite the reverse. He insists that it is totally unwarrantable to ascribe that doctrine to Edwards on account of the terms which he employs in these or any other passages in the Treatise,—that to teach that he represents the corruption of human nature as in itself sinful, is an egregious misrepresentation into which none of his readers can fall unless it be by being much "less careful than they should be," and "overlooking his peculiar views;"—a flat contradiction of his own "unambiguous precise explanation of the sense" in which he used his language. The reasons on which he bases this decision seem to partake very much of the nature of that species of epitome, of which the reader has already had an example.

The first is, that inasmuch as the substantive terms used by Edwards to denote "the natural depravity of mankind," are sometimes applied to objects figuratively, no evidence can possibly arise from his employing them *in the manner in which he does*, that he used them to denote that which is literally sinful and deserving of punishment! He says, "Edwards maintains that the natural depravity of mankind is a *moral* depravity. He calls *the same thing* a corrupt *tendency*, a sinful depraved *propensity*, a depraved sinful vicious *disposition*. And here perhaps the reader will imagine that I concede the very thing which I have before denied, viz. that this tendency, propensity, or disposition,

is according to Edwards, sinful *in itself* and deserving of punishment. But there are some things to be considered before this conclusion can be warranted. First the terms *tendency propensity and disposition* have different meanings in different applications." "Now all I intend by these remarks is that the mere terms propensity, disposition, &c. *As Used By Edwards*, do not decide that he means that which is *in itself* sinful and deserving of punishment." "ALL I intend by these remarks!" The application then of this newly invented rule so felicitously adapted to his wants, is *only* to be extended to *the whole of the phraseology with which the discussion is concerned.* What a clever canon of criticism to help one on in an embarrassing controversy! The substantive terms to which the discussion relates have different meanings in different applications,—therefore no evidence can arise from *The Application;—that is connexion with terms expressing their Quality—in which they are used in the case in question*, that they are employed to denote that which is *in itself sinful!*

After thus deciding that these terms, in the connexion in which they are used with others expressing their quality, do not denote that which is in itself sinful, he very unnecessarily proceeds to show that the epithets with which they are connected do not.

"Secondly, the epithets connected with these terms by our author, such as *moral*, *evil*, *bad*, *pernicious*, *sinful*, *&c.* have also different meanings in different applications." "Nothing is more common than" the figurative "use of

these terms, and *therefore* the mere terms furnish no evidence that they are not thus used by Edwards."

Undoubtedly not, if the preceding decision respecting the *substantive* terms in connexion with which these epithets are used, possesses any accuracy. If as is there settled—it is a fact that the terms propensity tendency disposition &c. *as they are used* with these epithets expressing the quality of the object for which they stand, do not denote that which is in itself sinful—then of course these epithets do not in expressing the quality of that object, denote that which is in itself sinful—and too obviously surely to need a formal annunciation.

His last reason for that decision is, that Edwards expressly represents this tendency to sin as in itself sinful and deserving of punishment! Edwards says,

"A *moral* tendency is the thing to be taken into the account," "when we are considering whether a *moral depravity* do not appear by a tendency to *a bad effect.*" "A moral tendency or influence *is by desert.* Then may it be said man's nature or state is attended with *a pernicious or destructive* tendency in *a moral sense*, when it tends to *that* which deserves *misery and destruction.*"

A moral tendency then is one that has desert, and *a pernicious* moral tendency, is a tendency to *that* which has desert of *punishment*,—so that the fact that man has a tendency to sin, proves that his tendency is also sinful and deserving of punishment.

T. R. however says in reference to this definition,

"Here then we have an unambiguous precise explanation of the sense in which Edwards applies the word *moral* to the natural depravity of man. It is a *moral* depravity, as the nature of man is attended

with a tendency to that which deserves misery and destruction. Is this asserting, or is it virtually denying the natural depravity of man to be moral *in itself* and deserving of punishment? Did only this single explanation of the term occur in the Treatise of Edwards, it would be enough to oblige every reader to limit the term moral and its kindred terms, in the instances under consideration, to that which *tends to moral effects*"—to the exclusion of that which is *in itself sinful.* " But Edwards has not left the matter here. In the third section he comes to show that " that propensity which has been proved to be in the nature of all mankind, must be a very evil depraved and pernicious propensity". And to prevent as it would seem the very misapprehension which I am considering, he says, &c."

And after quoting a passage which is to be presented to the reader, he adds,

" Language could scarcely be more explicit in excluding the idea that the propensity to sin of which the writer speaks is in itself sinful and deserving of punishment, and in confining his meaning to the single idea that this propensity is evil or sinful as it *tends* to moral evil or sin." " Indeed it must be obvious to every candid reader of his Treatise, that these definitions and careful and accurate distinctions, were made for the very purpose of guarding against the imputation of what is now termed physical depravity."

He thus wholly denies that Edwards represents the depravity which he ascribes to the nature of man as *really* sinful and deserving of punishment,—affirms that he denominates human nature corrupt with a moral depravity, depraved, sinful, evil, odious, detestable, &c. not at all to describe its *real nature*, but simply to express the fact that it *exerts*, *or has a tendency* to exert *sinful actions*, and pronounces this to be so obviously the fact, as to oblige every reader to perceive, and if he has candour, to acknowledge it.

Whether however such is the fact, let the reader judge from the following considerations:

First. Edwards no where states that he does not regard the depravity which he attributes to human nature as in itself sinful, nor affirms that he does not mean to be understood to represent it as such, nor advances any thing which by the established laws of interpretation can with any plausibility be construed as in the remotest degree intimating or implying any thing of that kind. And this consideration alone demonstrates the total inaccuracy of T. R.'s representation. There is an infinite dissimilarity between the doctrine that a depravity belongs to the created nature of man, which antecedently to and independently of all voluntary actions is *in itself sinful and deserving of punishment*, —and the doctrine that the nature of man does or will *exert sinful actions*. Had he therefore intended to inculcate nothing more than the latter doctrine, he would undoubtedly have employed language which in its most literal meaning expressed that doctrine, or else at least defined his terms so as to render his meaning as obvious as it would have been had he presented it to his readers in literal in place of figurative language. It is incredible had he designed to establish nothing more than the simple fact that the created nature of man exerts or has a tendency to exert sinful actions,—that he should have uniformly employed phraseology,—as no man can deny that he has,—which in its plain and literal signification means the other doctrine, and which therefore, unless he has by explicit defini-

tions explained it otherwise, the reader is compelled to understand as inculcating that doctrine.

Secondly. T. R. has not alleged any thing in the first two arguments which he advances for the purpose, which proves that Edwards employed his language in the figurative sense which he attribute to it. His arguments are:

"First. The terms tendency propensity and disposition have different meanings in different applications. They are often applied both to voluntary and to involuntary states of the mind. When in connexion with the epithet sinful, they are known to be applied to voluntary states of the mind, *the nature of the subject* requires us to understand that which is *in itself* sinful and deserving of punishment. But these terms are also applied to involuntary states of the mind, to which *strictly speaking no moral* quality belongs." "Now all I intend by these remarks is, that the mere terms propensity disposition, &c. *As Used By Edwards*, do not decide that he means that which is in itself sinful and deserving of punishment."

After having thus summarily decided that these terms in that "connexion with the epithet sinful," moral, evil, &c in which they are "used by Edwards," do not mean that which is in itself sinful, he adds,

"Secondly. The epithets connected with these terms by our author, such as *moral*, *evil*, *bad*, *pernicious*, *sinful*, *&c.* have also different meanings in different applications. When we apply these terms to known voluntary acts, we mean and are properly understood to mean, that they are in themselves moral evil or sinful, and deserving of punishment. *The nature of the subject* shows that such is our meaning. But we also apply these several terms with a different meaning,—naming *the cause* from *the effect*, which it tends to produce. Thus we speak of a moral law, a moral tendency, or a moral influence,—meaning simply that which *tends to produce moral results.*" "Nothing is more common than this use of these terms, and therefore the mere terms furnish no evidence that they are not thus used by Edwards."

This is an expeditious method of disposing of the terms and expressions of an author which threaten to embarrass one in making out his point. Begin by taking for granted the thing in dispute, that from "*the nature of the subject*" "*no moral quality*" *can* "*strictly speaking*," be said to belong "*to involuntary states of the mind;*" and wind up with the sweeping assumption, that because Edwards' terms are sometimes used *figuratively*, therefore even *as used by him*, they do not decide at all what his meaning is. A man's language is not to have any influence in determining what his meaning is! Of course then, every one is to ascribe to him whatever meaning suits his purpose best. T. R. undoubtedly has the merit of inventing this compendious rule, and has done it the homage, it is believed, to adhere to it very undeviatingly in his interpretation of Edwards.

But can he, when he resorted to this expedient to maintain his position in regard to Edwards' doctrine, have persuaded himself that his extraordinary assumptions could conciliate the acquiescence of his readers,—or have seriously reflected to what results they carry him? "No *moral* quality"—"*strictly* [that is *literally*] speaking—belongs" to "*involuntary* states of the mind,"—therefore Edwards never applied the terms "*corrupt tendency—sinful depraved propensity—depraved, sinful, vicious disposition*," &c.—*to* such states of the mind, with a purpose of representing them as *having* a moral quality! For example, Edwards says, "a propensity *to sin*, is *evil*, not only as it is calamitous and sorrowful, but as it is *odious and detestable*,"

and " must be *a very evil depraved and pernicious* propensity, making it manifest that the soul of man, as it is by nature, is in *a corrupt, fallen and ruined state*," that this " tendency is doubtless *a corrupt tendency in a moral sense*, so that this depravity is both *odious and pernicious in the highest sense*," that " *corruption or depravity*—or the nature of man *as corrupt and sinful*, came to be called *flesh*, because *a corrupt and sinful nature is what properly belongs to mankind as they are in themselves, and as they are by nature*,"—and that " one thing in the discourse of the apostle makes it plain, that by flesh he means something *In Itself corrupt and sinful*, and that is that he expressly calls it *sinful* flesh." Here are some specimens of " the applications" in which the terms in question are used in the Treatise ; yet " these terms, *as used by Edwards*, do not decide that he means that which is in itself sinful and deserving of punishment !"

And if this assumption is authorized, it follows with equal certainty that T. R.'s definition of the doctrine of physical depravity, presents no expression whatever of that doctrine, and in the whole of his struggles to exculpate Edwards from the charge of teaching it, he has only been assailing a spectre conjured up by his fancy, and which a single stroke from his potent rule would have laid forever. For if the term *sinful* cannot be *literally* applied to *an involuntary* state of mind, then in representing the doctrine of physical depravity as teaching " that there is concreated with man a substantial property or attribute of his nature which is *in itself sinful*," he cannot define it as being *literally* sinful,

but must be regarded as employing the latter term *figuratively*, and as meaning only, according to his own interpretation of it, that that created attribute *tends* to sin, which is identically the doctrine he ascribes to Edwards, and represents as infinitely unlike that of physical depravity.

It follows of course also on the same principle, that *no one* either ever *has*, or *can* express that doctrine, and consequently that T. R. is indebted entirely to the mere phantom of his own imagination for the impression that any one has ever ascribed it to Edwards.

Again; his argument is—that if the terms which a man employs ever have a *figurative* signification, his using them, and in any manner he pleases, cannot furnish any evidence that he employs them in their *literal* sense! But the terms used by T. R. have in some "applications" a figurative meaning. It follows therefore that he *always* uses them with that signification, and also that they are always employed by every one else in the same sense; and therefore that they never have a *literal* meaning, and consequently—since a figurative meaning never exists without a literal one to which it is related—that they have no *figurative* meaning, and therefore that they have no meaning at all, which is precisely in accordance with T. R.'s rule, and is certainly an excellent reason why no regard should be paid to a man's language in determining what his meaning is.

But let the accuracy of this rule be tested by an application to other topics. The names of the Deity are sometimes figuratively appropriated to created beings; there-

fore their being applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, even in the manner in which they are in the sacred volume, cannot furnish any evidence that they are not in those instances used with that figurative signification. There is then no evidence from that source of the divinity of the Son of God! Such an argument has often been advanced by Unitarians, and with propriety undoubtedly, if T. R.'s reasoning has any force. Can he be aware how he is thus sanctioning their use of it, and be willing to be regarded as here volunteering in their service, who at the commencement of his discussion he seemed anxious to have it believed are the only persons whose views he opposes in this controversy?

Such then are the first two arguments employed by T. R. to prove that Edwards does not represent the depravity of human nature as really sinful and deserving of punishment,—arguments which strike as fatal a blow at every evidence that he held any of the doctrines which are ever attributed to him, as at what is alleged as evidence of his inculcating that doctrine,—which extinguish at once all certainty not only in regard to his, but the doctrines of every writer common and inspired,—annihilate every thing like logic and philosophy, and plunge us into the gulph of universal doubt and ignorance.

Thirdly. His last argument for that purpose is equally extraordinary. He quotes several passages in which Edwards obviously exhibits the depravity of man's nature as in itself sinful and deserving of punishment, and then as

though the views which Edwards presents were precisely the reverse of what they are, declares that he makes no such representation, but expressly disavows that doctrine, and explains himself as using the terms sinful, evil, pernicious, moral, &c. only to denote that the depravity to which he applies them *tends* to that which is sinful, in distinction from being sinful in itself. His quotations are from the following passages:

"And then it must be remembered that it is a moral depravity we are speaking of, and therefore when we are considering whether such a depravity do not appear by a tendency to a bad effect or issue, it is a moral tendency to such an issue that is the thing to be taken into the account. A moral tendency or influence is by *desert*. Then may it be said man's nature or state is attended with a pernicious or destructive tendency in a moral sense, when it tends to that which deserves misery and destruction."

"A propensity to that sin which brings God's eternal wrath and curse, (which has been proved to belong to the nature of man,) is evil, not only as it is calamitous and sorrowful, ending in great natural evil, but as it is odious and detestable; for by the supposition it tends to that moral evil, by which the subject becomes odious in the sight of God, and liable as such to be condemned and utterly rejected and cursed by him. This also makes it evident that the state which it has been proved mankind are in, is a corrupt state in a moral sense, that it is inconsistent with the fulfilment of the law of God which is the rule of moral rectitude and goodness. That tendency which is opposite to that which the moral law requires and insists upon, and prone to that which the moral law utterly forbids and eternally condemns the subject for, is doubtless a corrupt tendency in a moral sense.

"So that this depravity is both odious and also pernicious fatal and destructive in the highest sense, as inevitably tending to that which implies man's eternal ruin: it shows that man as he is by nature is in a deplorable and undone state in the highest sense; and this proves that men do not come into the world perfectly innocent in the sight of God, and without any just exposedness to his displeasure. For the being by nature in a lost and ruined state in the highest sense, is not consistent with being by nature in a state of favour with God." pp. 133. 154.

The doctrine of physical depravity is thus beyond all rational controversy the doctrine which he presents in these passages. It is to *the propensity To Sin—the tendency To a Bad Effect,—the state tending To Sin*,—that he applies the terms evil, moral, corrupt, sinful, &c.,—not to the mere words tendency propensity, &c., without any designation of their nature. He denominates *a tendency To Sin, sinful*, and denominates it so,—not at all to express the fact that it *is* a tendency to sin, which would be a ridiculous tautology,—but to describe its *character as really sinful and deserving of punishment*:—and alleges the fact that the nature of man is attended with a propensity to sin, as demonstrating that his nature is in itself sinful and worthy of punishment. Such he stated at the commencement of the Treatise was the principle on which he reasoned,—and he announces it again at the head of the section from which this last passage is taken. He says, from the fact that all men sin, "I infer that the natural state of the mind of man is attended with a propensity of nature, which is prevalent and effectual to such an issue; and that therefore their *nature is corrupt and depraved with a moral depravity* that amounts to and implies their utter undoing." p. 137. And having in the first section proved the proposition, and in the second drawn the first inference from it, that all men are under the influence of a tendency in their nature to sin," he says in the caption of section third, "That propensity [to sin] which has been proved to be in the nature of all mankind, must be *a very evil depraved and pernicious*

propensity; making it manifest that *the soul* of man as it is by nature is in *a corrupt fallen and ruined state*, which is the other part of the consequence drawn from the proposition laid down in the first section." His object here then is,—not to prove that mankind *have* a propensity to sin,—for he had established that position in the preceding section—but to prove in *addition* to that, that that propensity must *itself be sinful*, and then from that supposed fact, that *the soul itself*, as it is by nature, is corrupt and sinful. To ascribe to him any other design, is so palpably to contradict his language, and so obviously to involve him in the most appalling absurdity, that it excites surprise that any one can have done it.

If as T. R. alleges, Edwards applies the terms moral, sinful, depraved, corrupt, odious, detestable, evil, bad, &c. to the tendency, propensity, state, and nature of man, only to express the simple fact that his nature propensity, &c. *tends to sin*, then his second inference is nothing more than a repetition of his first,—and his object in his third section,—which he represents as being to demonstrate that that propensity to sin which he had in the second section "proved to be in the nature of all mankind, must be a very evil depraved and pernicious propensity,—making it manifest that the soul of man as it is by nature is in a corrupt fallen and ruined state,"—is only to prove what he had before established, that that propensity to sin which is in the nature of all mankind, is *verily a propensity to sin*, making it manifest that the soul of man as it is by nature is in a state that *tends to sin!*

T. R.'s interpretation of his terms makes similar nonsense of the passages he has quoted to prove that the meaning which he ascribes to them is that with which they were employed by Edwards. This will be demonstrated by the substitution of T. R.'s definition of those terms, for the terms themselves. The passages will then read thus:

"And then it must be remembered it is a depravity that *tends to sin*, we are speaking of; and therefore when we are considering whether a depravity that *tends to sin*, do not appear by *a tendency to a sinful effect or issue*, it is *a tendency to sin* that *tends to a sinful issue*, that is the thing to be taken into the account. A tendency or influence *to sin* is by *desert*. Then may it be said, man's nature or state is attended with *a tendency to sin*, *in the sense of tending to sin*, when it *tends to that* [*sin*] which deserves misery and destruction." "*A propensity to that sin* which brings God's eternal wrath and curse, (which *has been proved* to belong to the nature of man,) is *a propensity to sin*, not only as it *tends to sin*, and *tends to sin*, ending in great natural evil, but as it *tends to sin*, and *tends to sin*. For by *the supposition* it *tends to sin*, by which the subject becomes odious in the sight of God. This also makes it evident that the state which it has been proved mankind are in, is a state that *tends to sin*, *in a sense of tending to sin*, that it is inconsistent with the fulfilment of the law of God: *That tendency* which is opposite to that which the moral law requires, and prone to that which the moral law forbids, is doubtless *a tendency to sin*, in *a sense of tending to sin*. So that this depravity both *tends to sin*, *and tends to sin* in the highest sense, as *inevitably tending to sin*, which implies man's eternal ruin: it shows that man as he is by nature is in a state that *tends to sin in the highest sense;* and *this* proves that men do not come into the world perfectly *destitute of a tendency to sin* in the sight of God, For the being by nature *in* a state that *tends to sin in the highest sense*, is not consistent with being by nature *exempt* from a state that tends to sin."

What a comment on the genius of Edwards to represent him as filling his pages with such unexampled nonsense! An author cannot experience a greater calamity than to fall into the hands of a commentator, who attempts to vin-

dicate him from a charge of error, by involving him in such labyrinths of contradiction and absurdity.

To all this demonstration of the total erroneousness of the construction which T. R. puts upon Edwards' language, the fact must be added, that Edwards after representing that the word *flesh* denotes *the created nature of man*, says in so many words, that it is plain the apostle means by it, "*something in itself corrupt and sinful*," and alleges as proof of it, "that he expressly calls it *sinful* flesh;" in which instance he unquestionably uses the term sinful, and interprets the apostle as using it, in its *literal* meaning, as denoting that the object to which it is applied, is really "*in itself* corrupt and sinful."

It were easy to allege many other considerations in further confirmation of the erroneousness of T. R.'s interpretation of Edwards' language, but it is presumed the reader, by this time at least, regards it as ascertained too clearly to admit of controversy, that Edwards exhibits the depravity which he ascribes to the nature of man, as in itself sinful and deserving of punishment.

VIII. T. R.'s account of Edwards' doctrine exhibits the whole of the Treatise as equally absurd.

1. If that account is correct, Edwards was entirely mistaken in imagining that any necessity existed for demonstrating and vindicating the doctrine of original sin in opposition to Dr. Taylor. He employed himself through his whole discussion in contending with a mere creature of his fancy, and was guilty of the grossest folly and injustice in

regarding Dr. Taylor as an antagonist. For according to T. R.'s representation, their doctrines were in all *important respects*—if not identically—*the same*. It was not in the remotest degree a subject of dispute between them, whether all men come into the world in such a state that they actually run into sin, and thereby incur a desert of punishment, nor whether they are very apt to sin; for by Edwards' own statement Dr. Taylor expressly confessed and asserted that. p. 139. 148. But the sole question between them was, whether the created nature of man is depraved with a depravity that is itself sinful, and is the cause of his exerting sinful actions. Such is Edwards' own representation. He says, if both "the truth of the proposition, [that all men sin,] and the certainty of the consequences which I infer from it," [that an effectual propensity to sin belongs to the nature of men, and that therefore their nature is depraved with a moral depravity,] "can be clearly and certainly proved, *then I trust none will deny but that the doctrine of original depravity is evident*, and so *the falseness of Dr. Taylor's scheme demonstrated*, the greatest part of whose book called *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, &c.* is *against the doctrine of innate depravity*. He speaks of the conveyance of *a corrupt and sinful nature* to Adam's posterity, as *the grand point* to be proved by *the maintainers* of the doctrine of original sin." If therefore according to T. R., Edwards did not teach that such a depravity belongs to human nature, but expressly disclaimed and denied it, and only taught that there is "something concern-

ed in bringing sin to pass, which is not an essential attribute of man's nature," but "depends on his external circumstances, and may wholly cease by a change in these circumstances,"—then he laboured under the grossest misapprehension in imagining that his Treatise was a refutation "of Dr. Taylor's scheme." The idea of its being a controversy with him, is a stark absurdity. Their creeds instead of being opposed, were coincident, and they were labouring together in the same cause, and in the most happy harmony! What an encomium on their discernment! It has been said that the arguments of Edwards so baffled and chagrined his antagonist as to occasion his death. How unfortunate was it that some one gifted with the happy perspicacity of T. R. was not present to extricate him from so absurd an embarrassment, and develope to him the consolations which the Treatise was adapted to afford.

2. T. R.'s representation renders Edwards' plan of argument, and a large portion of his reasoning, equally absurd,—as has already been shown by the substitution of his definitions in the place of Edwards' terms.

3. It ascribes equal inconsistency and absurdity to his views of tendency, concreated dispositions, and imputation. The whole of his definitions and reasoning on those subjects represents the cause of man's sinning as seated in his nature. But according to T. R. his *doctrine* is, that that cause lies in his external circumstances, so that whatever he teaches on those subjects, is in direct contradiction to his doctrine!

It is apparent from these considerations, that if Edwards is to be exempted from the charge of the most unexampled weakness, inconsistency and absurdity, in the composition of the Treatise, and is to have the merit of a knowledge of what his views were, and of a capacity to express and sustain them in a perspicuous and logical manner, it must be admitted that his doctrine is that of physical depravity.

IX. This representation of his views is confirmed by the fact, that the doctrine of physical depravity has been held and taught from the reformation to the present time, by all that part of the Reformed Church with which he has ever been considered as agreeing.

His views of original sin have always and justly been regarded as substantially the same as those which were entertained and inculcated by Luther, Calvin, and the other chief reformers, which are expressed in the creeds of the Reformed Churches, were sanctioned by the synod of Dort, and cherished and taught by the Calvinists as a body from the reformation to his own time, and which have ever since been and are still held by the Calvinistic Churches both of Europe and America. He has never been imagined to have introduced a *new* doctrine on the subject, nor to have modified in any essential particular, that which had prevailed in the Reformed Churches antecedently to the publication of his Treatise. On the contrary he has always been viewed by the Calvinists as the most able advocate of their doctrine.

Nor have the churches since that time had the reputation

of having abandoned his doctrine, and adopted other views of the subject. On the contrary their creeds and confessions remain the same, and with few exceptions substantially the same representations continue to be presented by their clergy from the pulpit and press.

But the doctrine of these churches and teachers with whom Edwards thus coincides, is that of physical depravity. It is not necessary here to enter into a detailed proof of this fact; It is to be again briefly adverted to, and those who may wish to see a formal discussion of it, are referred to the "Proofs" in the first No.—that the Common Doctrine respecting Human Depravity exhibits it as a Physical Attribute, in which it is believed abundant evidence will be found, that that doctrine has been held by the Reformed Churches, and inculcated by their most eminent teachers and writers from the reformation to the present day.

The fact then that the doctrine in question is taught by those with whom Edwards has always been considered as agreeing, is another proof that that is the doctrine which was held by him.

X. It may be added in further confirmation of this view of Edwards' doctrine, that T. R. has not been able to advance any thing which proves it to be inaccurate.

He neither has, nor—I may add—can produce any thing from the Treatise in which Edwards expressly declares or implies that his doctrine is what T. R. asserts it to be, nor in which he denies or intimates that his doctrine is not

what I represent it. On the contrary all T. R.'s statements in support of his account of Edwards' doctrine, are either in direct contradiction to Edwards' express declarations, or at least indebted entirely for their plausibility to a suppression of what Edwards says on the topics to which they relate, or to an absurd misapprehension of his meaning.

Thus his denial that Edwards represents the depraved nature of man as in itself sinful, is in contradiction not only to the whole strain of his language and reasoning on the subject, and so completely too as to make utter nonsense of them, but also to his explicit declaration that the created nature of man denoted by the term flesh, is "in itself corrupt and sinful," and that "a corrupt and sinful nature is what properly belongs to mankind as they are in themselves."

His denial that Edwards exhibits the tendency to sin which he ascribes to mankind as a substantial attribute of human nature, and representation that he regarded it as depending on mere external circumstances, is not only utterly unauthorized by any thing which Edwards advances, and inconsistent with the whole of his definitions and reasoning respecting it, but is also in total contradiction to his declaration, that it "does not consist in any particular external circumstances, but is inherent and seated in that nature which is common to mankind, which remains the same however circumstances may differ."

His attempt to make out that Edwards does not in his

views of imputation exhibit men as personally guilty at their first existence, but on the contrary there furnishes a key to all his phraseology, by which it is demonstrated that he neither taught nor held that doctrine, is not only at total variance with Edwards' professed object in his discussion on that subject, and with all he advances respecting it, but is in direct contradiction to his explicit declaration that the first existing of a corrupt disposition in their hearts, is the inherence of Adam's sin in them, and that that sin is *not* theirs merely because God *imputes* it to them, but is *truly and properly* theirs, and is imputed to them on *that ground;* —that is in other words, that in being of such a depraved disposition as they are, they are truly and properly apostates in the same sense as Adam was, and are therefore regarded and treated as truly and properly guilty of the same apostacy.

It deserves to be remarked too, that T. R. has not noticed most of these and other passages of the kind in which Edwards so explicitly exhibits his views on the topics in dispute, which are undoubtedly by far the most essential in the controversy, and the mere quotation of which would not only have totally refuted all his statements and reasonings, but shown that they are quite inexcusable misrepresentations.

It ought to be observed also, that in professedly giving his reader on his first page Edwards' account of the subject of his Treatise, he has represented it as though it were nothing more than what is contained in Edwards' general pro-

position, in which he simply affirms that all mankind sin and incur a demerit of ruin;—and merely quoting that proposition, has totally omitted Edwards' inference from it contained in the next sentence—"*that therefore their Nature is corrupt and depraved with a moral depravity*," which is *the only part of his subject with which this controversy is concerned;*—and then proceeded to remark and reason as though Edwards in this statement at the commencement of his Treatise of what he designed to establish in it, *expressly excluded* the doctrine that the physical nature of man is depraved!—and what perhaps is still worse,—has never in his whole discussion taken any notice of that inference, nor given to his readers the remotest intimation that Edwards ever made and endeavoured to sustain it, much less that it was "*the grand point*" which by his own account he wrote the Treatise *to prove*, and to which his general proposition and every thing else in the work are only *subsidiary!* He has not indeed quoted a passage with the exception of one in which Edwards speaks of "*the corruption of Nature*," nor hinted that he used such language.

It is by thus omitting to notice those portions of the Treatise which relate most directly to the subject in dispute, and a knowledge of which is by far the most material to the reader in order to his forming a correct view of Edwards' doctrine, that he has been able to give any show of plausibility to his denial that Edwards teaches what those passages contain, and by only quoting places which are much less decisive of the controversy, that he has been

able to make such representations of Edwards' doctrine as are adapted to lead those who happen to rely implicitly on his statements, to the conclusion that Edwards does not teach what is in fact the "*grand*" doctrine of his Treatise, and what it was his avowed object in that work to maintain. The course which he has pursued, and the danger of deception to which he has exposed such of his readers as chance to confide in his statements, cannot be more aptly described than in the representation which Edwards has given of the conduct of those interpreters of Paul's writings, whom it was his object to refute in his Treatise. He says in reference to them,

"If the simple reader is not very much on his guard, if he does not clearly see with his own eyes, or has too much indolence or too little leisure thoroughly to examine for himself—he is in danger of being imposed on with delusive appearances; as he is prepared by a parade of learning, criticism, exact version, penetration into the new scope, and discerning of wonderful connexions, together with the airs these writers assume of dictatorial peremptoriness, and contempt of old opinions and old expositions,—I say such an one is by these things prepared to swallow strange doctrine, as trusting to the superior abilities of these modern interpreters.

But I humbly conceive their interpretations, particularly of the Apostle Paul's writings, though in some things ingenious, yet in many things concerning these great articles of religion, are extremely absurd, and demonstrably disagreeable in the highest degree to his real design, to the language he commonly uses, and to the doctrines currently taught in his epistles. Their criticisms when examined appear far more subtle than solid; and it seems as if nothing can possibly be *strong* enough, nothing *perspicuous* enough in any composure whatever to stand before such *liberties* as these writers indulge. The plainest and most nervous discourse is analyzed and criticised till it dissolves into nothing, or til lit becomes a thing of little significance. The holy scripture is sublimized into a mere mist, or made to evaporate into a thin cloud that easily puts

on any shape, and is moved in any direction with a puff of wind just as the manager pleases. It is not in the nature and power of language to afford sufficient defence against such an art so abused; as I imagine a due consideration of some things I have had occasion in the preceding discourse to observe may abundantly convince us." p. 489, 490.

The fact that he has thus failed to furnish any thing to support his view of Edwards' doctrine, and has been obliged to resort to such expedients to give to his representation what little plausibility it can claim to possess, may therefore be considered as constituting additional evidence, that the doctrine of Edwards is what I have ascribed to him.

On the whole, then, it is believed these considerations may be regarded as sufficiently demonstrating that his doctrine of original sin is the doctrine of physical depravity.

The conclusion to which we have thus arrived, obviously derives its chief interest from its relation to the theology of the present day. It were a matter of small consequence that Edwards is proved to have taught the doctrine in question, were he the only one who has inculcated it. But the fact that his doctrine is the current doctrine of the present time, and that therefore, in proving it to be the doctrine of physical depravity, it is shown that that is the doctrine, with very moderate exceptions, of the whole protestant church, both of this and the other hemisphere, invests it with the highest importance.

That substantially the same views as Edwards entertained of the nature of man, are still cherished and inculcated, it would seem, must be too obvious to be seriously doubted. Has it ever been heard that the churches of this country or

Europe have abandoned and denounced his doctrine as erroneous, and adopted a different one in its room? When did such a revolution take place? Who was the author of it? Where are the evidences of its occurrence? What is the doctrine which has supplanted that of Edwards, and in what books can it be found? Are not the creeds of the Congregational churches as a body—the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, the Baptist and Methodist churches, the same on this subject as they were in his time? Are not the views which are now exhibited from the pulpit and press respecting it, essentially the same as were his? And are not the same terms, the same modes of expression, and the same methods of reasoning which he employed, still generally used in its inculcation? Who is there that has not from his childhood read and heard that *human nature* is depraved, and that its depravity is conveyed from parents to children, and is the cause that men exert depraved actions? Who is there that has not all his days heard it inculcated that men are, in their natural state, of *a depraved disposition*—that no moral influence can possibly induce them to yield obedience to the law of God—that until renewed, they are *incapable* of holiness and the knowledge of divine things—that the means of grace, let them be carried to what extent they may, neither ever do nor can exert any other influence than to lead them to sin—and that the agency of the Divine Spirit by which they are regenerated is direct, and employed in producing a change in the physical constitution? But what are all these prominent doctrines of the current

theology, but so many forms of the doctrine of physical depravity? Can any one fail to see that they imply that doctrine and depend entirely on its accuracy for their propriety and truth—or deny that, with a few exceptions, they are universally taught?

The truth of this representation has been exemplified by the reception which the first No. of this work has met with from the clergy and laity of different denominations. Of those who have perused it, all—almost without an exception as far as is known—have acknowledged the prevalence of that doctrine.—Many have unhesitatingly avowed their belief of it and its associate system, and denounced the opposite system, exhibited in the third part of that No. as grossly heretical,—and of those who have assented to the latter system, not one can be found, it is believed, who does not regard it as too notorious a fact to be denied, that the doctrine of physical depravity is the doctrine currently inculcated from the pulpit and press.

If T. R. cannot otherwise convince himself that such is the fact, and is willing to hazard the experiment,—let him publicly profess his disbelief of the doctrine of physical depravity and all those of its associate doctrines which are founded on and involve it, denounce them as erroneous, and announce the purpose neither to inculcate them himself, nor countenance their inculcation by others, and I imagine he will not long want decisive proofs from the churches and clergy around him, that they hold those doctrines, and regard Edwards as having held them, and cherish them too with too much confidence and veneration, to leave any

room for the expectation that they can be easily induced to abandon them.

That that doctrine is totally erroneous, is not less certain than it is that it is generally held.

That nothing has ever been discovered demonstrating its truth, is apparent from the manner in which it is taught, which presents the most decisive evidence that it is not a doctrine directly revealed in the scriptures, or intuitively seen from facts,—but is a mere theory contrived to account for facts taught in the sacred volume respecting the condition and conduct of mankind. What for example are all the statements and arguments of Edwards respecting it, but so many gratuitous assumptions? Where are there any proofs of the truth of his theory in regard to the influence of the fall on Adam and his posterity,—or respecting concreated dispositions and imputation? He has not even pretended to advance any thing in the shape of evidence to demonstrate their truth. They are mere statements of his opinions, as unauthorized and as unphilosophical as the theories of Origen, Pelagius, or Swedenborg.

And of what force are his arguments from scripture to sustain his doctrine?

He has alleged nothing from them as evidence that the nature of man is depraved, except the simple fact that they represent men *as exerting sinful actions:* their sinful actions are indeed all which he has any where advanced as proof of their depravity. But *all* the actions exerted by mankind, and ascribed to them by the scriptures, are not sinful. And what claim to conclusiveness can an argu

ment from their actions have, which only takes notice of one class of them? There is no more propriety in inferring from their sinful actions—without any reference to the obedience which is exerted by them—that their nature is depraved, than there is in inferring from the holy actions which they exercise—without any reference to their disobedience—that their nature is not depraved. If his method of reasoning from a part of the actions of beings to their physical nature is legitimate, it may be proved as conclusively as he demonstrates the depravity of human nature, that all animals are men—that men are angels,—and even that each of these are like the Deity, and the Deity like them! There is indeed no absurdity too great nor blasphemy too shocking to be advanced by it at once into a doctrine of theology. For example.—Animals exhibit in a *part* of their actions, indications of understanding, memory, volition, desire of pleasure and aversion to pain. But these are characteristics of *intelligent beings*. They are therefore rational and moral creatures. Of course then they are subjects of a moral government, and therefore either holy or sinful, and consequently destined undoubtedly either to immortal happiness or misery! Who would have expected such reasoning from the lofty intellect of Edwards? It is humiliating to reflect that through a long succession of ages the teachers of christianity, and even those most illustrious for genius, learning and piety, have believed and inculcated as one of its cardinal doctrines, a dogma which is entirely indebted for its existence to such an argument.

Those actions of an animal which are inconsistent with reason and moral agency, may with just as much propriety be overlooked when we are reasoning respecting its nature, as may those actions of men which are inconsistent with a depravity of their physical nature, when we are reasoning respecting *their* nature.

This objection to Edwards' inference of the depravity of human nature from the fact that men exert sinful actions, can never be obviated, until it is proved that *a change* is wrought in *the physical constitution* of all those who exercise holiness, which is *antecedent to* and *the cause* of the change in their *conduct*,—since if those holy actions are exercised without the occurrence of any such change in their physical nature, it is manifest that nothing ever belonged to their nature incapacitating them for the exertion of such actions, and therefore that their nature is not—as the doctrine of physical depravity represents—such *antecedent* to their regeneration as to cause their exerting sinful actions, and render it physically necessary that all their actions should be of that kind. But it manifestly can never be proved that any such change is wrought in the physical constitutions of those who exercise holiness. There is nothing from which it can be demonstrated, except the change in their conduct, and to deduce it from that, is merely *to assume* what must be proved, before it can be inferred from their actions with any appearance of propriety.

And moreover, if the change from transgression to obedience which takes place when a person is renewed, furnishes just ground for the inference that a change has been

produced in his physical nature which is the cause of that alteration in his conduct,—then every subsequent change in his conduct, either from obedience to sin, or sin to obedience, presents equally just ground for the conclusion that a corresponding change has in every such instance been produced in his physical nature; as manifestly a change of conduct at one time, can no more demonstrate an alteration of the physical constitution, than an equal change at any other. But will any one pretend that either revelation or experience teaches or authorizes so monstrous a doctrine, as that the human mind undergoes a change of its physical nature in every instance when a change takes place in its actions either from sin to holiness, or holiness to sin? Edwards' doctrine then neither has been, nor ever can be demonstrated to be true.

There is however no such want of evidence to prove its erroneousness. It is refuted by every moral attribute of the Deity and every measure of his administration; by every dictate—that has any relation to it—of human reason, and every incident in human experience.

The doctrine that God creates men with such a nature that they are incapable of exercising the actions he requires, and necessarily exert those which he prohibits, and that he hates and punishes them for possessing suhc a nature and exerting such actions, *true*—a revelation from his Omniscient Spirit, and sanctioned by the solemnities of miracles and prophecy! It is surely a mockery then to talk of benevolence and justice as attributes of his character. What

can be ascribed to him involving a higher degree of unrighteousness and malevolence ?

The doctrine is equally contradictory to his administration. Will any one pretend that in instituting over men a moral government, in using motives to induce them to obey his laws, and in punishing them for sin and rewarding them for obedience, he treats them as though they were utterly incapable of acting in accordance with his requirements ?

The doctrine is equally irreconcilable with the dictates of reason and experience. Who can believe it to be a dictate of reason, that an infinite being must pursue such a course of conduct toward creatures as that doctrine ascribes to the Most High—or pretend to have experienced such treatment from his hands—or to be conscious of a change in his physical constitution in every instance in which a change takes place in his conduct ? The doctrine then is assuredly erroneous.

And it is obviously as pernicious as it is false. How can its influence be any thing better than the most fatal—totally misrepresenting as it does both the nature of man, and the divine government,—exhibiting him as utterly incapable of obedience, and in effect therefore on the one hand denying his obligations and exculpating him from all blame, and on the other ascribing to God the injustice of requiring an unreasonable service, and inflicting unmerited punishment? Who can fail to see that a doctrine which thus gives to religion the aspect of paradox absurdity and falsehood, and throws over the divine administration the appearance of injustice, must necessarily impair the feeling of obligations,

and excite perplexity, discouragement, and aversion? Or who is not aware of the notorious fact, that many of the most formidable temptations which embarrass the unrenewed in their religious inquiries and convictions, are presented by this doctrine which teaches, in contradiction to their obligations and guilt and to the exhortations of the gospel to repentance and faith,—that the cause of their ruin is seated in their physical nature utterly beyond the reach of any created power,—that therefore no efforts which they can make toward reformation can be of any avail,—and consequently that their dependence on God for renovation is precisely the same in kind as for continued existence and a resurrection from death? And who does not know that multitudes are thus led to excuse their continuance in impenitence,—to throw the blame of their rebellion on God,—to impeach the justice of his administration,—and to resolve on discarding all thought of religion as a source of perplexity and terror in place of peace and hope? Could a full development be made of the influence which it exerts, it would undoubtedly be seen to be one of the most pernicious errours that has borne the name of a doctrine of revealed religion since the Reformation, and to constitute by its general prevalence one of the most formidable obstacles to the success of the gospel.

That such are the character, prevalence, and influence of this doctrine, are surely facts of the most solemn interest to the clergy and public at large, and deserve to become, and undoubtedly must ultimately, the theme of earnest consideration. The subject has indeed already attracted no in-

considerable share of attention, and its nature and the controversies respecting it, authorize the expectation that it is soon to excite a much more general and ardent interest. The doctrine must necessarily, at some period or other, *be given up* by the church,—manifestly from the fact that it is a most palpable and fatal error,—and strong probabilities appear that its abandonment—at least to a considerable extent—is speedily to take place. It is not to be believed that a dogma which like that, contradicts the dictates of human reason consciousness and obligation, the doctrines of revalation and the attributes of the Deity, can continue uninterruptedly to be held and inculcated, when men are on all other subjects fearlessly breaking away from a vassalage to names and systems, asserting the right of judging for themselves, acquiring habits of independent investigation, and rapidly advancing in the knowledge of mental philosophy logic and criticism. It has through every period of its prevalence been a source of excruciating perplexity and embarrassment to multitudes of every rank in intellect and knowledge;—reason has been confounded and faith staggered by its felt inconsistency with innumerable of the most important truths learnt from revelation and experience;—and discussion respecting it and the progress of knowledge on the topics to which it is related, will more and more develope its deformity and perniciousness, and render its rejection inevitable by all whose ignorance or prejudice does not debar truth from access to their minds or prevent it from exerting over their faith its legitimate influence. There are now indeed encouraging indications

that important changes are taking place in the views of many respecting it. But although its ultimate abandonment may thus be regarded as certain—yet enjoying as it does the sanction of great names and of a long prevalence—wrought as it is into the prevailing system of theology—and possessing a strong hold on the faith of the church at large, it is not to be expected that it will at once be generally relinquished, nor without severe struggles on the one hand to accomplish its extermination, and on the other to vindicate and perpetuate it.

There is however at all events—whatever its issue may be—a prospect of a controversy respecting it, which shall awaken high interest, incur severe scrutiny, and be fraught with an important influence on the interests of the church, and this fact devolves an obligation on every friend of truth, whether an advocate or opponent of the doctrine, to yield it his serious attention, and prepare himself to vindicate, in a manner worthy of a christian, what he regards as sanctioned by the Gospel.

It is especially incumbent on those who engage in the controversy to reflect well on the course which they take to accomplish their several ends. If the doctrine is disbelieved, and the object is to prevent its prevalence, the proper method surely is not—in the face of the most palpable facts, to protest and attempt to prove *that it is not held!* Whose acquiescence can such a course be expected to succeed in conciliating? Certainly not that of the intelligent and conscientious. They are not to be induced to give up their doctrines, and persuaded against their consciousness that

they never held them, simply by its being denied that they have. How poor a compliment to their heads and hearts is it, to imagine that such an expedient can betray them into an abandonment of their creed?

But to say nothing of its absurdity in that respect, it is futile to hope that such a course can succeed. It necessarily defeats itself by virtually exculpating that from all objection, which it is its object to suppress. T. R.'s respresentations, for example, amount to a formal denial that Edwards advanced *any thing erroneous* in his views respecting original sin, and to a full vindication of all his language statements and reasoning on the subject. He does not "hesitate to affirm that" there "is not the remotest semblance of the doctrine of physical depravity" in Edwards' theory—that "language could scarcely be more explicit in excluding the idea" of that doctrine than his is—that "it must be obvious to every candid reader of his treatise" that his "definitions and careful and accurate distinctions were made for the very purpose of guarding against the imputation of what is now termed physical depravity"—and that to imagine that he held that doctrine is to suppose that he fell into "an inconsistency too gross to be imputed to him. His representations therefore—as no error is ascribed to Edwards' doctrine, except that it exhibits the depravity of man as a physical attribute,—if they accomplish any thing whatever—go completely to justify all his theories statements arguments and phraseology, and perpetuate the approbation and use of them. Whether such was the intention of T. R, or not, I shall leave the reader to decide.

Nor,—if on the other hand the doctrine is believed, and the object is to perpetuate its prevalence,—is it the proper course *to deny*, against the most obvious facts and every one's knowledge, *that it is held.* Were it possible that such a denial could contribute to that end, either by calming the apprehensions of its opposers, and thence preventing controversy respecting it,—or by calling forth the evidences of its universal prevalence and thereby conciliating an acquiescence in it as true—still its success could never exempt it from reprehension for the disregard of truth which it would indicate. But it could never gain success. How absurd would it have been in the reformers to have attempted to give currency to their peculiar views, by disavowing them,—or in the catholic clergy to have endeavoured to perpetuate the errours of their church, by denying that they were held? Such are not the expedients by which public opinion is to be controlled. The only method of exterminating errour is, to demonstrate its existence and expose its deformity and injuriousness; and the only mode of giving supremacy to truth is, to present it palpably to the eye, that it may gain its victory over the understanding by the effulgence of its light, and over the heart by the attractions of its excellence.

No discussion can be worthy of the subject, nor answer any laudable intention, which does not have for its sole object the development and support of truth,—nor which does not rely solely for its success on an impartial exhibition of facts—not on their being shrouded from the eye, or invested with a false colouring. The latter course may in-

deed temporarily answer the ends of selfishness or party, but is sure to result in discredit to him who adopts it, and injury to the cause which it is employed to sustain. There are too many who examine and judge for themselves to leave a possibility that such artifices should long succeed.—Truth will sooner or later emerge from the darkness in which it is attempted to confine it, and attract the more attention from its having been temporarily suppressed.

It is not a light thing on the one hand, to represent the church at large as holding and inculcating a doctrine so repugnant as that of physical depravity, at once to the honor of God, the truths of his word, and the consciousness and responsibility of men ;—and much less is it on the other, to vindicate what the church holds and teaches on that subject as the doctrine of revelation ;—and how criminal were it in a controversy so vitally concerned with the glory of God and fraught with the destinies of men, to disregard their high claims, and descend to a subserviency to the mere purposes of selfishness ?

Let it then be felt by every one who participates in the discussion that truth is the only acquisition at which it is worthy of a christian to aim in it ; and be recollected that truth,—whatever may temporarily obstruct its progress—must ultimately prevail, and that it will at its victory leave to those who have sought it, no reason to regret the sacrifices which their devotion to it involved ; and to those who sought it not, no occasion to exult in the ends for which they abandoned its cause.

VIEWS

IN

THEOLOGY.

N° IV.

THE DOCTRINES

OF THE

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

RESPECTING

CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS.

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THE DOCTRINES

OF THE

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

In 1824, the Rev. Mr. Duncan of Baltimore, delivered a discourse before the Directors, Professors, and Students of the Theological Seminary at Princeton,—and afterwards published it,—entitled "A PLEA FOR MINISTERIAL LIBERTY,"—in which he advanced, among others, the doctrines that the minister of the gospel should regard himself as an ambassador of God,—that the volume of revelation should be the sole source and standard of his doctrines—that he should study and judge of its meaning for himself—and that in delivering the messages which it makes it his duty to inculcate, he should be actuated supremely by his responsibility to God; and illustrated and enforced them by contrasting them with sectarianism which seeks the aggrandizement of self and party in place of the divine glory;—with the substitution, so often seen, of the opinions of men for the voice of revelation as authority for doctrines, and of human systems in place of the

scriptures as guides and standards of faith ;—and finally with the attempts of theological teachers and ecclesiastical courts to give the force of law to their opinions, and arbitrarily dictate what shall be held and taught as the doctrines of God.

The sentiments which he thus developed—ill suited to the views and purposes of the Professors and their friends in respect to the Seminary and the Presbyterian Church, and entirely unexpected from him—were heard by them with surprise indignation and alarm. The insinuation on such an occasion and in such a style, that the theological systems which enjoy the reputation of orthodoxy are fraught with much error,—that sectarianism is not the spirit of the gospel—that ministers and ecclesiastical judicatories transcend the rights of their office in constituting creeds "drawn out" and adopted by their "collected wisdom," the standards of faith, and attempting by authority favour and frowns to sway the opinions of others to a subserviency to their own, was regarded as nothing better than the inculcation of pernicious heresy,—in itself most daring and criminal, insolent in the extreme to them, and dangerous in a high degree to the Seminary and Church.

Such an imagined attack it was of course thought necessary to repel, and accordingly to vindicate his own and the principles of those who think and act with him on the subject, and to impress the Students of the Seminary with due veneration for the formularies of the Church, Dr. Miller at the commencement of the next session, addressed to them

"A LECTURE" ON "THE UTILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS," and immediately after gave it to the public.

This exposition of the doctrines on the subject which are inculcated at that Seminary is well worth a serious attention. In my apprehension the views entertained by these gentlemen are both incorrect,—Mr. Duncan having on the one hand, as is seen from his more recent publications, fallen into the error of regarding creeds as necessarily productive of evils which arise only from the misuse of them, and thence of questioning the propriety of using them for even the most lawful and necessary purposes; and Dr. Miller on the other, of imagining them to be natural and efficacious instruments of producing benefits of which they are totally incompetent to be the means, and thence of claiming for them a respect and use wholly superior to their deserts.

Without entering into a minute consideration of all which he has taught on the subject, I shall present to the reader the more important points of the controversy, and contrast the doctrines he has advanced, with the views I have formed respecting them.

The question which first merits attention, respects the import of the declaration or profession of faith involved in the public subscription or assent to the confession, which is required of candidates in order to their ordination in the Presbyterian Church.

Is it a simple profession of their belief,—a mere declaration of the fact that they regard the doctrines to which

they assent, as the doctrines of the scriptures: and is it required, simply for the purpose of ascertaining their qualifications,—so far as their faith is concerned,—for the sacred office?—or does it besides that, involve an engagement to teach that system of doctrine, and no other; and such an engagement, that their continuing to adhere to the belief and inculcation of it, is made the tenure by which they are to retain the pastoral office and authority to teach, with which their ordination invests them?

Dr. Miller strenuously claims,—and it is one of the most important of the pretences advanced by him in the Lecture,—that such an engagement is involved in it.

"From the view which has been presented of this subject, we may decide HOW AN HONEST MAN OUGHT TO ACT, AFTER SUBSCRIBING TO A PUBLIC CREED. *He will feel it to be his duty to adhere sincerely and faithfully to that creed in public and in private;* and to make it his study to promote, by all the means in his power, the peace and purity of the body with which he has connected himself. And if he should at any time alter his views concerning any part of the creed or order of the Church in question, it will be incumbent on him to inquire whether the points concerning which he has altered his mind are of such a nature as that he can conscientiously BE SILENT concerning them, and "give no offence" to the body to which he belongs. If he can reconcile this with an enlightened sense of duty, he may REMAIN IN PEACE. But if the points concerning which his views have undergone a change, are of *so much importance* in his estimation as that he *cannot be silent*, but must feel himself bound to *publish and endeavour to propagate them;* then let him PEACEABLY WITHDRAW, and join some other branch of the visible Church with which he can walk harmoniously. Such he may find almost every where, unless his views be singularly

eccentric. *But at any rate he has no more right to insist on remaining and being permitted publicly to oppose what he has solemnly* VOWED *to receive and* SUPPORT, than a member of any voluntary association which he entered under certain engagements, but with which he no longer agrees, has a right obstinately to retain his connexion with it, and to avail himself of the influence which this connexion gives him to endeavour to tear it in pieces.

"It is no solid objection to this view of the subject to allege, that every man is under obligations to obey the great Head of the Church, altogether paramount to those which bind him, in virtue of any ecclesiastical engagements, to obey the Church herself. This is most readily granted. No man can lawfully bind himself to disobey Christ in any case whatever. But this principle, it is conceived, has nothing to do with the point under consideration.

"Though a man cannot properly bind himself *always* to believe as he *now* believes, nor *always* to remain in connexion with the ecclesiastical body which he *now* joins, yet he may safely promise that he will be a regular and orderly member of the body *as long as he does* remain in connexion with it. When he ceases to be able to do this without sinning against God, he will, if he be an honest man, immediately withdraw. If he remain, and suffer himself habitually *to violate his engagement*, under the pretence of benefiting the body *to which he has vowed allegiance, he will be chargeable with the sin of treacherously and basely "doing evil that good may come."*

"To illustrate my meaning by a familiar example. Every student of this Seminary has at his entrance made a solemn promise that "as long as he shall continue a member of it, he will conscientiously and vigilantly observe all the rules and regulations specified in the plan for its instruction and government, so far as the same relate to the students; and further, that he will obey all the lawful requisitions of the Professors and Directors," &c.

"As this engagement was voluntarily made, no honest man will doubt that you are all bound to act in conformity with it to the utmost tittle, as

far as you have ability. Suppose, however, that one of your number should become persuaded that some of the "regulations specified in the plan" of the Seminary, are not only unwise and inconvenient, but also immoral; what ought he to do? Ought he to remain in the institution, and habitually violate the regulations to which he excepted, pleading that he could not conscientiously obey them—because though he had solemnly engaged to do so, he felt himself under a prior and paramount obligation to "obey God rather than man?" This surely no christian would approve, nor any faithful government tolerate. No; every principle of honour and integrity would dictate that he should immediately *withdraw from the Seminary;* and if after withdrawing he should be able to convince the General Assembly of our Church that his exceptions were just, and should prevail with that body to alter the offensive rules; then, and not till then, he might with a good conscience resume his place in the institution." pp. 72–74.

According to this representation then, the candidate in assenting to the confession, formally pledges himself to teach the doctrinal system which it contains, and no other: and in such a manner, that should he afterwards adopt different views on any important subject, he is both debarred from all right to inculcate them, and placed under the most imperious obligation at once to relinquish his pastoral office, and all the authority with which he was invested at his induction into it. In "subscribing" to the confession, "he solemnly vowed to receive and support," and constituted it "his duty to adhere sincerely and faithfully to that creed in public and in private," so that to "publish and endeavour to propagate" any other, is to "violate his engagement" to "the body to which he vowed allegiance," and to be guilty of "sinning against God," and "treacherously

and basely doing evil that good may come;" and so therefore that if such a change takes place in his views as to prevent his continuing to inculcate "that creed," and make it necessary for him to teach another, he is bound immediately to "withdraw" from that "branch of the church" with which he is connected;—in short, is under the same obligation from honour conscience and his voluntary engagement, to abandon his station and office, as a member of any voluntary association is to retire from it, when he becomes incapable of complying with the conditions, on the fulfilment of which he pledged himself his connexion with it should be made to depend.

These are certainly pretty bold views, and if correct, are unquestionably of the greatest importance. They present to us the extraordinary doctrine, that ordination in the Presbyterian Church simply imparts authority to inculcate the doctrinal system of the confession; and that the adoption and inculcation of any other views, of themselves,—so far as right and conscience are concerned,—excommunicate from the sacred office. A convenient doctrine undoubtedly to rid the church of such of its ministers as since their introduction into it have embraced and taught any views differing from those of the confession; and an admirable instrument to awe the pupils of the Princeton Seminary into an implicit adherence to that formulary as a necessary means of gaining employment and reputation:—a doctrine however for which they are wholly indebted to Dr. M. as happily for the honour and peace of the Presbyterian Church there is nothing of the kind in its

plan of government; and no pretence more unauthorised and ridiculous could have been advanced than that such, or any thing lending the least countenance to such a doctrine, is contained in that instrument.

The only proposition having a reference to the doctrines of the confession to which a candidate is required to subscribe, is the following: "Do you sincerely receive and "adopt the confession of faith of this church as containing "the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures?" His assent to this surely does not involve any vow or engagement,--to teach the doctrines of that confession, and no others,—of such a nature that the fulfilment of it is made the condition on which he is to retain his authority to teach. It manifestly is simply an acknowledgment and declaration of the fact, that he regards the doctrinal system of the confession as that which the scriptures teach. It no more constitutes an engagement to preach that system and no other, the violation of which is to divest him of his right to preach, than his assent does to any other of the propositions of the formula;—no more than the statement of his doctrinal belief by a candidate for ordination in a Congregational Church, constitutes a promise of implicit adherence to that system, on penalty of relinquishing his office.

It obviously was not the object of the compilers of the plan of government in introducing this test, to obtain from the candidate such an engagement; but simply to ascertain his qualifications—in respect to his views of doctrine—for admission to the ministry. It is of course *expected* of a

candidate by those who ordain him, that he will preach the system to which he assents, and that only, but not at all from any formal promise to that effect. Such a promise as Dr. M. represents to be involved in subscription, is not a proper basis for the expectation that he will adhere to it. The appropriate and only appropriate ground for that expectation is, the fact that—in their estimation—the doctrinal system of the confession is actually and obviously the system of the scriptures ; that he, as he declares, conscientiously regards it as such ; and that his knowledge piety and stability of character—being such as qualify him for the sacred office—furnish assurance that he will not be led by light reasons to change his belief. These are sufficient pledges, and all that can either be reasonably asked or given, for his continuing to maintain and inculcate the system which he professes. If they are not enough to secure his adherence to that system, the proper remedy lies, not in extorting from him promises, but in subjecting him to liability to appropriate discipline.

But more than this;—the candidate not only is not required to promise that he will teach the scheme of doctrine to which he subscribes and that only, or relinquish the ministry in the Presbyterian Church ; but on the contrary a promise is required of him which explicitly obliges him to pursue precisely the opposite course, should he adopt other views of the doctrines of the gospel, as is seen from the following engagement.

" *Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintain-*
" *ing* THE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL, *and the purity and*

"*peace of the church whatever persecution or opposition*
"*may arise unto you on that account?*"

This is a promise most formal and explicit, to maintain "*the truths of the gospel*" *at all events*; and not at all conditional or dependent on any consideration whether those truths accord with the confession or not, and consequently not capable of being made void by any change of views respecting their nature.

The candidate's engagements therefore, so far from obliging him to suspend his instructions and abandon his office, should he become persuaded that the doctrines of the gospel are not accordant with those of the confession; on the contrary recognise and enforce it as his duty zealously and faithfully to maintain what he regards the gospel as teaching, whatever opposition or persecution it may cost him from the church or ecclesiastical body to which he is amenable. And such of necessity is his duty;—an ordination to the ministry being of course an ordination to the ministry of *the gospel*, and nothing else;—an investment with authority and subjection to obligation to preach the truths and all the truths of revelation, *let the views of those truths entertained by the organs of imparting that authority be what they may.* Who ever heard of any other species of investiture with the sacred office? of ordination —not absolutely and unconditionally to teach the doctrines of the gospel—but absolutely and unconditionally to preach those of a sect, and to teach the doctrines of God only on condition of their being believed to be those held by that sect? Or who ever heard of a candidate—on being

ordained—pledging himself by a solemn promise never more to preach the gospel to the church over which he is placed, should any change occur in his views of its doctrines?

As then on the one hand, the subscription to the confession required of a candidate involves no such engagement, or vow of allegiance as Dr. M. represents, it throws no obstacle whatever,—so far as his obligations are concerned,—in the way of his inculcating other views than those of the confession, whenever he becomes persuaded that they are taught in the word of God. It leaves him as completely at liberty to teach what he regards the gospel as inculcating, as though he had never assented to the confession. And as on the other hand his ordination itself to the ministry, and the explicit promise to that effect required of him, constitute it unconditionally his duty "to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel whatever opposition or persecution" it may occasion him, he is not at liberty to pursue any other course than to teach in that manner what he regards as those truths. And consequently no alteration of his views of the doctrinal system taught in the scriptures, can devolve on him any obligation to "withdraw" from his station, nor render him "for remaining" and publicly inculcating those points of his belief which differ from the doctrines of the confession, "chargeable with the sin of treacherously and basely doing evil that good may come." *His* obligations remain the same as though no alteration had taken place in his belief; and must until some other cause interpose to change them.

Those however of his people and the ecclesiastical body to which he is amenable may not; and should they—regarding his new views as disqualifying him for the ministry—cause him to be impeached and deposed, it will then and not before, become his duty to relinquish his office.

Dr. M. has indeed himself in another part of the Lecture presented precisely this view of the object and import of subscription to the confession.

"A church creed professes to be merely an *epitome or summary exhibition* OF WHAT THE SCRIPTURES TEACH. Of course when any one subscribes it, he simply declares by a solemn act how he understands the Bible; in other words what doctrines he considers it as containing." p. 38.

"If no rational objection could be made to his subscribing a declaration drawn up by his own hand, would it not be exactly the same thing as to the spirit of the transaction, if with a view SIMPLY TO ASCERTAIN THE FACT OF HIS BELIEF, NOT TO DICTATE LAWS TO HIS CONSCIENCE, a statement previously drawn up by the church herself should be presented for his voluntary signature? What is required of an individual in such a case is—not that he shall believe what the church believes; *but simply that he shall* DECLARE *as a matter of fact*, whether he *does* possess that belief which from his voluntary application to be received into christian fellowship with that church, he may be fairly presumed to possess." p. 50.

Dr. M. himself thus admits that the whole object of demanding from a candidate subscription to the confession, is "simply TO ASCERTAIN THE FACT OF HIS BELIEF—NOT TO DICTATE LAWS TO HIS CONSCIENCE." And that all that is done by him in subscription is, merely declaring "by a solemn act how he understands the Bible:—in other words what doctrines he considers it as containing." By his own

confession therefore it involves no such "vow of allegiance" as he ascribes to it, nor engagement never to preach any other doctrines than those of the creed. How he is to reconcile these contradictory representations, and vindicate himself for advancing so unauthorised and reprehensible a pretence, is left to him to decide.

The next question of importance in the controversy, respects the *lawfulness* of subscription to creeds.

This—the import of that act being what has been represented—is nothing more than the question whether it be lawful for a candidate for ordination to make a public declaration of his doctrinal belief,—a question about which there of course can be but little room for controversy.

Presbyteries and other ecclesiastical bodies have undoubtedly a right, and it is as indubitably their duty, to ascertain the doctrinal views of those whom they invest with the sacred office. It were preposterous to imagine that they can either be under obligation, or at liberty, to introduce a man into the ministry, and accept his pledge to discharge its duties with fidelity, with whose views of the gospel they have no acquaintance whatever,—of whom they neither know whether he holds or rejects what they regard as the truth,—whether his creed is that of a christian, a mussulman, or a hindoo. And this right on the part of those who ordain, of course involves a corresponding obligation on the part of the candidate, to make them acquainted with his views of divine truth, and an obligation which it would seem every man of sense must perceive and feel. To a full exhibition of his doctrinal belief no man of piety

intelligence and independence can have any objection. He will alike condemn any denial or disguise of his sentiments, and disdain to owe his induction into the sacred office to the ignorance of those respecting him at whose hands he is to receive it. He who could shrink from such an avowal of his faith would sufficiently demonstrate his total unfitness for the ministry. If his confidence in the correctness of his views and his love of truth and sense of obligation to profess and defend it, were not sufficient to induce him to acknowledge and maintain the articles of his faith in the presence of the body of whom he asked to be invested with authority to teach that faith, it would present just ground for the expectation that he would disguise his sentiments on every other occasion when hope or fear presented inducements to it.

The propriety then of a candidate's making such a public declaration of his faith being thus manifest, it is obviously a matter of small consequence in what mode it is done,—whether as among Presbyterians, by subscription or assent to a public creed, or by answer to verbal interrogatories or a voluntary statement of the fundamental articles of his belief, as among Congregationalists. There can be no rational objection to assenting to a creed for that purpose, any more than to making a verbal statement,—their import being precisely the same.

The question next claiming attention, respects the *value* of creeds, as "tests of truth,"—the use obviously for which they are chiefly designed—"bonds of union," "fences against error," "manuals of christian doctrine, fitted for

the instruction of members of churches," or for any other useful ends which they are supposed to be adapted to attain.

My impressions in relation to this—the main topic of the Lecture—will be best exhibited in the observations which I shall have occasion to make on the views respecting it advanced by Dr. M.; many of which appear to me extremely exceptionable. Without adverting to all the claims in eulogy of creeds on which he relies, or adhering to the order in which they occur in the Lecture, I shall notice successively such of his representations as seem of most consequence in the controversy, and most worthy of animadversion.

I. One of the most important then of the positions advanced by him in commendation of creeds and confessions, is couched in the insinuation that the greater portion of mankind are not competent "to draw from the sacred writings themselves a consistent system of truth," and that those formularies are of "incalculable use" in helping them to that invaluable acquisition.

"It were easy to show that confessions of faith judiciously drawn and solemnly adopted by particular churches, are not only invaluable as bonds of union, and fences against error, but that they also serve an important purpose as accredited manuals of christian doctrine, *well fitted for the instruction of those private members of churches who have neither leisure, nor habits of thinking sufficiently close to draw from the sacred writings themselves a consistent system of truth.* It is of incalculable use to the individual who has but little time for reading, and but little acquaintance with books, to be furnished with a clear and well arranged compend of religious doctrine which he is authorised to regard, not merely as the work of a single enlightened and pious divine. *it as drawn out and adopted by the collected wisdom of the church to which he*

belongs. There is often a satisfaction to a plain unsophisticated mind not to be described, in going over such a compend article by article, examining the proofs adduced from the word of God in support of each, and "searching the scriptures daily to see whether the things which it teaches are so or not."" pp. 35, 36.

That is in other words, the unlearned, and thence most "private members of churches," are incapable of acquiring a "consistent system of truth" from the word of God alone; but they can derive it from "a compend drawn out and adopted by the collected wisdom of the church to which" they belong, and such a compend is the best remedy for the insufficiency of the scriptures. When they study such a "manual of christian doctrine," it is "incalculable" how fast they learn! and indescribable what satisfaction they obtain! A becoming sentiment to come from the pen of a professor in a Theological Seminary of the nineteenth century; and a flattering compliment to creeds to volunteer an eulogy of them at the expense of the word of God, in order to render their vindication satisfactorily complete! How is it that Dr. M. has persuaded himself that this disparagement of the intelligibility of the scriptures, and the capacity of "private members of churches" to comprehend them, is authorised, and can meet the approbation of the friends of religion?

The inspired writers themselves entertained very different views of the adaptation of the messages of revelation to the comprehension of mankind. It was a characteristic of the ministry of the Son of God so glorious as to be ranked by him along with his miracles as an evidence of his mes-

siahship, that "to *the poor* the gospel is preached." The prophets in their anticipations of it, predicted that under his reign, the "way of holiness" should be "a highway" so plain, that not only "those private members of churches who have neither leisure nor habits of thinking sufficiently close," but "the wayfaring men though fools, shall not err therein." And Paul represented it as a trait of his own and the ministry of his fellow teachers, that "we use great plainness of speech" by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," so that "if our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost." They never dreamed of there being any necessity that the light of creeds and confessions should be reflected on the pages of revelation in order to render its doctrines intelligible to the unlearned, but addressed their messages to mankind indiscriminately, as being all competent and under obligation to understand and obey them, whether at "leisure" and with "habits of thinking sufficiently close," or not. And that the gospel in that manner delineates the way of truth and salvation too plainly to be easily mistaken by even the most illiterate who have access to its instructions, is surely too obvious to need to be demonstrated, especially in refutation of a sentiment like the one under consideration. It were indeed an indignity to the word of God, gravely to agitate the question whether it equals the compositions of men in its adaptation to instruct mankind; and a reproach to the reader to employ a formal array of argument to convince him, that the inspi-

rations of the Omniscient Spirit delivered to us by prophets and apostles, and the discourses of the Son of God himself, are not surpassed in intelligibility by the Presbyterian confession.

This impeachment however of the scriptures—it must be confessed—is not peculiar to Dr. M. nor a novelty in the church, but expresses a prominent doctrine of the prevalent theology, and is a theme of frequent and zealous declamation. It is—as must be known to all—very currently taught from the pulpit and press, not only that "the Bible is a sealed book," "hard to be understood," but that religion itself, however inculcated, is necessarily—in consequence of a depravation of their physical powers—wholly incomprehensible to men in their natural state, and must remain so until a miraculous change is wrought in their constitutions; and that even to the regenerate it is involved in so much mysteriousness as to be the object rather of faith merely, than comprehension.

And similar views have long prevailed in the Protestant world, and among Catholics have advanced still farther, the clergy of that church having—as is well known—carried their disrespect to the word of God so far, as formally to substitute creeds and traditions in its place, and wholly interdict it to "those private members of churches who have neither leisure nor habits of thinking sufficiently close to draw from the sacred writings themselves a consistent system," as more likely from its mysteriousness to involve them in error, than lead them to a knowledge of the truth.

Dr. Miller therefore it must be admitted, is by no means singular in this opinion. Nor does it appear so strange that creeds and confessions are believed by him and others who accord with him in their views, to be adapted to help men to a system of doctrines which they would not be likely "to draw from the sacred writings themselves;" when it is recollected what that scheme of doctrine is which alone, in their estimation, enjoys a character of truth and consistency. For if all the various dogmas which make up that scheme, and those only, are true, and constitute "a consistent system," it must be confessed that those who had no other means than the word of God, of gaining a knowledge of several of them, would never be able to discover them from that; such for example as those which relate to atonement and depravity. They might unquestionably "draw from the sacred writings themselves" the fact that "Jesus was crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every man," and that "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" but would never be able to extort from them the contradictory dogma taught at the Princeton Seminary, that he died for only a *part* of mankind, and is "the propitiation" for the sins of none except the elect. They might also as easily learn from them the fact, that "he died" as the substitute of men—"the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God"—without discovering any authority for the conclusion so confidently drawn from it by the advocates of the former doctrine, that

in that death he must have endured the exact punishment due to those for whom he suffered. And in like manner they might find the doctrine in the sacred volume, that men become sinners in consequence of the fall of Adam, whilst they would search its pages in vain for any intimation that it takes place, as is so generally held, by his fall's occasioning a depravation of their physical nature rendering them incapable of exercising obedience. The aid of creeds and confessions, or some other work of the kind, is indispensable to conduct them to a knowledge of these doctrines. And where in the word of God could they find the important articles of the prevalent creed, that means are of no use in the conversion of men;—that regeneration is a change of the physical constitution;—that God decrees all the actions of his creatures;—and several other kindred dogmas? The remotest glimpse of these great pillars of the prevalent scheme of theology, would never reach the eye of one individual in a myriad of millions who studied no other work than the volume of inspiration. It is to later teachers than prophets and apostles that they must be indebted for a knowledge of them,—to Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Arminius and their coadjutors and successors, the great oracles of fashionable orthodoxy and compilers of creeds and confessions.

The fact however that the creeds which are in estimation in the church are thus adapted to lead men to the adoption of doctrines which they could never "draw from the sacred writings themselves," so far from being a recommendation

is a fatal objection to them, the dogmas to which they in that manner help them being of course the commandments of men, and alike inconsistent with truth and unfriendly to piety.

II. But Dr. M. not only regards creeds and confessions as thus "invaluable," "as manuals of christian doctrine well fitted for the instruction of those private members of churches who have neither leisure nor habits of thinking sufficiently close to draw from the sacred writings themselves a consistent system of truth," but represents them as of still greater importance *as alone furnishing adequate motives to a zealous study of christian doctrine.*

"Another argument in favour of creeds publicly adopted and maintained, is that they are friendly to the study of christian doctrine, and of course to the prevalence of christian knowledge."

"When men love gospel truth well enough to study it with care, they will soon learn to estimate its value; and when they learn to estimate its value, they will soon be disposed to "contend for it" against its enemies who are numerous in every age; and this will inevitably lead them to adopt and defend that "form of sound words" which they think they find in the scriptures. On the other hand let any man imbibe the notion that creeds and confessions are unscriptural and of course unlawful, and he will naturally and speedily pass to the conclusion that all contending for doctrines is useless and even criminal. From this the transition is easy to the abandonment of the study of doctrine or at least the zealous and diligent study of it. *Thus it is that laying aside all creeds naturally tends to make professing christians indifferent to the study of christian truth; comparatively uninterested in the attainment of religious knowledge; and finally regardless and of course ignorant of "the faith once delivered to the saints."*"

"If the friends of orthodoxy and piety then really desire to cherish ıd maintain a love for the discriminating study of christian doctrine, a aste for religious knowledge, a spirit of zeal for the truth in opposition to that miserable indifference to articles of faith which is so replete with mischief to every christian community in which it is found; then let them be careful to present and diligently to keep before the eye of one another and the eye of the public that "good confession" which they are commanded to profess "before many witnesses." If they fail to do this, then nothing short of a miracle can prevent them from sinking into that coldness and sloth with respect to the study of doctrine, and finally into that deplorable "lack of knowledge" by which millions are constantly "destroyed."" pp. 22. 25.

That is in so many words,—creeds are the great instrument of exciting the love and study of sacred knowledge, and the respect in which they are held presents an exact criterion of the degree to which that knowledge is esteemed and cultivated. Wherever on the one hand those formularies are publicly adopted and revered, an ardent love of truth and thorough acquaintance with it prevail; whilst on the other hand, wherever they are not used, "professing christians" are "indifferent" to "truth," and consequently ignorant of it!

Yet this pretence, extravagant as it is, undoubtedly follows as a necessary consequence from the former, and can claim for its support all the authority which sustains that. For if there are men "who have neither leisure nor habits of thinking sufficiently close" to gain "a consistent system of truth" without the help of creeds, they of course cannot, without their aid, be expected to feel any inducement to make the attempt. They must sit down at once in indifference or despair.

This commendation however of those formularies is as absurd as the other, and is equally disrespectful in its imputations on religion and its friends. Its whole force rests on the assumption that none can ever zealously study, nor consequently gain a knowledge of christian doctrine, unless they first adopt a creed; and thence that all those who study and make themselves acquainted with a doctrinal system, *actually adopt it, before they either gain any knowledge of it, or even make it a subject of examination.* For how else is it that the neglect of creeds is "naturally" attended by total indifference and ignorance respecting the faith? A flattering compliment to his fellow-professors and the zealous friends of creeds in the Presbyterian Church whom it was his object to vindicate and eulogise as examples to his pupils and the clergy at large. But the idea that the adoption of a creed, in this, or any other manner, can exert such an influence, is preposterous. Could a man be found so regardless of his obligations, and of the import of the act, as to embrace a system of religious doctrines, without comprehending or examining their nature, it is not to be believed that the mere fact of his having adopted them, could necessarily or naturally induce him to engage zealously in their study. He who could remain so totally indifferent to the character of the scheme he embraced, at the very time of his selecting it to be his creed, as to make no inquiry respecting its nature; would, I should imagine, be pretty likely to continue equally so afterwards. And he who was susceptible of being prompted to the acquisition

of sacred knowledge by any appropriate motives, would be sure to feel their influence, and obey their dictates, before venturing on so important a step as deciding what doctrinal system should be regarded as true.

Nor can the adoption of a system of doctrines *at any stage of inquiry*, be adapted to exert on any rational mind such an influence as Dr. M. represents. It is the inducement furnished by the nature of truth itself, its relations to his obligations and destiny, and the fact that God has revealed it and enjoined the study and knowledge of it, that prompts such an one to make it the object of his research. To imagine that he should overlook these considerations, and his desire for sacred knowledge arise solely, or at all, from the unimportant circumstance of his having given a formal assent to a doctrinal system which had been "drawn out and adopted by the collected wisdom of the church to which he belongs," is preposterous beyond degree. What a wretched picture does Dr. M.'s representation present of the origin of christian zeal for the knowledge of divine truth! According to his reasoning, the fact that the revelation made to us in the scriptures is from God; that its messages have been announced to us by prophets apostles and the Saviour himself, and sanctioned by the most stupendous miracles; that it presents to us a delineation of the divine character purposes and will, and a just representation of our own character and condition; that it unfolds to us our immortality, and the destinies which are treasured up for us in another world; that it discloses to

us the method which God has devised for our salvation, recording the history of the ministry and death of the Redeemer, and announcing the great events which are to mark the progress and consummation of his reign; and finally that the voice of God himself enjoins the perpetual study and meditation of this revelation;—all these sublime awful and infinite considerations produce forsooth no effect whatever,—neither awaken a sense of obligation, excite concern, nor arouse curiosity. Their agency is lost in the influence exerted by creeds drawn out by men, and adopted as an echo of the truths of revelation!

But not to argue any longer from the nature of creeds against the likelihood of their exerting so extraordinary an influence as he ascribes to them, let us turn our eye to those ministers and churches, the state of whose theological knowledge might be expected to demonstrate the existence of that agency, if it is exerted. If his representation is authorised, we shall find that they who neglect the use of those formularies, are involved in the most "gross and deplorable ignorance" of theology;—"that laying aside all creeds," they have "naturally" become "indifferent to the study of christian truth, comparatively uninterested in the attainment of religious knowledge, and finally regardless, and of course ignorant, of the faith once delivered to the saints." Does this frightful picture then accord with fact? Are all the present Congregational clergy of New-England, for example, thus absolutely "regardless and ignorant" of the doctrines of revelation? And

were their predecessors, the Edwardses, Bellamy, Smalley, Strong, Dwight? Or are the "private members" of their churches? They have confessedly been guilty of that neglect of creeds which according to Dr. M. must infallibly have involved them in this "deplorable ignorance." Or is such the fact even in regard to the Unitarians to whom he refers in proof of his representation? Have they neither any knowledge whatever of their own, nor any other system of doctrine; nor in reality any doctrinal system of their own whatever?

Or on the other hand, are those who are addicted to the use of creeds, distinguished by a superior love of sacred knowledge, or acquaintance with their doctrinal system? Do the Presbyterian clergy at large, or those of them who with Dr. M. are most ardently attached to these formularies, hold a higher rank in professional attainments than their Congregational brethren in New-England? It cannot be necessary to answer these inquiries. That the clergy of the Presbyterian Church equal those of the Congregational denomination in many respects, I shall not question; but that they excel them in theological knowledge or zeal in its cultivation, is the last pretence I should expect to see set up in their favour, or deem it worth while to refute.

This claim then in favour of creeds is preposterous to the last degree. Those formularies have never exerted any such influence as he attributes to them, in this or any other section of the church. Nor is it possible that they should, as they add nothing to the motives which revelation itself

presents, for the study of divine truth. If any inducements are furnished by them peculiar to themselves, they are of course entirely sectarian, and must therefore expend their influence wholly on those who have a higher respect to human than divine authority, or a stronger love of the interests of party than of the truth itself.

III. But Dr. M. claims still further in favour of creeds and confessions, that they are the only instrument by which a church can *preserve itself in the knowledge and belief of the doctrinal system which it has adopted.*

"But perhaps it will be proposed that there be a *private understanding* vigilantly acted upon, that no ministers or members be admitted, but those who are known by private conversation with them *substantially to agree* with the original body, with regard both to doctrine and order. In this way some allege discord may be banished, and a church kept pure and peaceful without an odious array of creeds and confessions." "*But the question what is soundness in the faith, however explicitly agreed upon by the members of the church among themselves, cannot be safely left to the understanding and recollection of each individual belonging to the body in question. As well might the civil constitution of a State instead of being committed to writing be left to the vague and ever-varying impressions of the individual citizens who live under it.* In such a constitution every one sees there could be neither certainty nor stability. Scarcely any two retailers of its articles would perfectly agree; and the same persons would expound it differently at different times as their interests or their passions might happen to bear sway. Quite as unreasonable and unsafe, to say the least, would it be to leave the instrument of a church's fellowship on a similar footing. Such a nuncupative creed, when most needed as a means of quieting disturbances, or of excluding corruption, would be rendered doubtful and of course useless by having its most important provisions called in question on every side.

A case in which if it were made operative at all, it would be far more likely to be perverted into an instrument of popular oppression, than to be employed as a means of sober and wholesome government." pp. 13, 14.

A church then without a written creed is, in Dr. M.'s estimation, in precisely the same predicament *in respect to an ascertained standard of doctrine*, that a civil community without a written constitution is, in regard to fixed principles of government. It *has* no written, explicit, unchangeable and universally acknowledged standard, in which the articles of its belief are embodied, and to which it can at all times appeal. All its doctrines are left entirely to mere "recollection" and tradition for their preservation; "to the vague and ever-varying impressions" of men, and consequently have nothing of "certainty nor stability." But where are the scriptures all this time? Has Dr. M. forgotten that there is such a volume "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?" Or is that so "vague and ever-varying in the impressions" which it produces, that a church that has nothing else, is in "as unreasonable and unsafe" a condition as it regards an adequate standard of truth and "instrument of fellowship," as a civil community is with nothing but "recollection" custom or tradition for its constitution? Here we again have the doctrine, it seems, that "private members of churches have neither leisure nor habits of thinking suffi-

iently close to draw from the sacred writings themselves a consistent system of truth." And I fear we have the cause of Dr. M.'s perpetually falling into these extravagancies in his eulogy of creeds—his having in fact, however unwittingly, suffered those formularies—in his ardent attachment to them—in a great measure to usurp the place of the Bible in their influence over him and become his ultimate standard of doctrine.

"Before the church *as such* can detect heretics, and cast them out from her bosom; before she can raise her voice in "a day of rebuke and of blasphemy" against prevailing errors, her governors and members must be agreed what is truth; and unless they would give themselves up, in their official judgments, to all the caprice and feverish effervescence of occasional feeling, they must have some accredited permanent document, exhibiting what they have agreed to consider as truth. There is really no feasible alternative. They must either have such "a form of sound words," which they have voluntarily adopted and pledged themselves to one another to "hold fast;" or they can have no security that any two or more successive decisions concerning soundness in the faith will be alike." pp. 16, 17.

Dr. M. of course wishes this representation to be regarded as applicable to the Presbyterian Churches of the United States,—following necessarily as it does from his former positions—although a more serious imputation on them never fell from the pen of their bitterest enemy; as it ascribes to them a degree of ignorance instability and childishness, which it were a slander to attribute to any but the weakest of mankind; for it implies that neither the nature of the doctrines themselves which they have adopted,

nor any proofs of their truth and divine origin which may have been the reasons of their embracing them, constitute any certainty at all that they will still adhere to them; that the only ground for the expectation that they will continue to believe and maintain them is, the mere fact that they have been "drawn out, and adopted" by them as their "written creed." It exhibits their faith therefore as having no solid and authorised foundation. It is not possible that an intelligent evangelical faith should be liable to be thus shifted and modified by "the caprice and effervescence of occasional feeling," and "blown about by every wind of doctrine;" nor that such a faith, founded, and founded only on a perception of the divine nature and certainty of the truths which are its object, should derive any additional stability from so unimportant a circumstance as those truths having been expressed in written propositions, and formally assented to in that form.

Were it a fact that those who are addicted to the use of creeds, have no other ground of dependence that they shall continue to adhere to the doctrinal views which they have embraced, than the simple consideration that they have adopted and published them as their creed; it would form a more serious objection to those formularies than has ever yet been advanced. What a most unspiritual faith would that be, whose nature were such, that the only method by which uniformity and stability could be imparted to it were, that of investing it, by embodying it in a written creed, with a material and independent existence,—"a local

habitation and a name"—so as by that means to exempt it from "the caprice and effervescence of occasional feeling!"

Dr. M.'s apprehensions however for the faith of those who are without written creeds are quite unnecessary. Were the Bible to be withdrawn from the churches, or neglected, and creeds and confessions to usurp its place as the only standard of truth, there would indeed be the greatest reason to expect that "caprice," "effervescence of feeling," and a thousand other things would unsettle and diversify their views, and cause their "successive decisions concerning soundness in the faith" to be very unlike. But as long as they hold the volume of revelation in their hands, and the only reasons of their adopting and professing a doctrinal system are legitimate proofs of its truth and excellence, obtained from the sacred volume, there can be no ground to fear that the disuse of creeds can interrupt their adherence to the same faith. This all experience verifies. The successive members of the New-England churches for example, have without creeds, adhered to the same system of doctrinal views with as much uniformity, as have those of the Presbyterian Church. And it were absurd to expect that it should be otherwise. It is a compliment to creeds very little deserved, and a most irreverent imputation on the scriptures, to insinuate that without the aid of those formularies, the marks which distinguish the doctrinal truths,—which it was the object of the sacred volume to reveal to our knowledge,—from error, are so obscure, and the evidences which demonstrate them so imperfect, as to

render it a matter of necessity or certainty that the children of God should continually fluctuate and contradict each other in their views of them.

IV. But in addition to these representations in commendation of creeds and confessions, Dr. M. also claims, that the adoption and publication of them *is the only method by which a church can make known to others the views which it entertains of the doctrines of the gospel, express its testimony in favour of truth, and "raise its voice against error."*

"Christians collectively as well as individually are represented in scripture as witnesses for God among men. They are commanded to maintain his truth, and to "hold forth the word of life" in all its purity and lustre before a perverse generation, that others may be enlightened and converted." "These and many other commands of similar import plainly make it the duty of every christian church to detect and expose prevailing heresies; to exclude all such as embrace radical heresy from their communion; and to "lift up a standard" for truth whenever "the enemy comes in like a flood."

"But does not all this imply taking effectual measures to distinguish between truth and error? Does not all this necessarily infer the duty of drawing and publicly manifesting a line between those who while they profess in general to believe the Bible, really deny all its essential doctrines, and those who simply and humbly receive "the truth as it is in Jesus?" But how is this distinction to be made, seeing those who deny as well as those who embrace the essential doctrines of the gospel, equally profess to receive the Bible? It can only be done by carefully ascertaining and explicitly declaring how the church herself, and how those whom she suspects of being in error, understand and interpret the Bible; that is, by extracting certain articles of faith from the scriptures according to her understanding of them, and comparing with these articles the professed belief of those whom she supposes to be heretics. And what is this but

extracting from the scriptures *a confession of faith,—a creed*, and applying it as a test of sound principles? It does really appear to me that those orthodox brethren who admit that the church is bound to raise her voice against error, and to "contend earnestly" for the truth; and yet denounce creeds and confessions, are in the highest degree inconsistent with themselves. They acknowledge the obligation and importance of a great duty; *and yet reject the* ONLY MEANS *by which it can be performed.* Quite as unreasonable, I am constrained to say, as the taskmasters of Egypt, they require work to be done without allowing the materials necessary to its accomplishment." pp. 15, 16.

If such are "*the only means*" by which churches can declare how they "understand and interpret the Bible," and deliver their testimony in favour of truth, it follows that nothing whatever has ever been done by those who neglect the use of creeds, to manifest their doctrinal belief to those around them, and consequently that nothing whatever is known of their systems of doctrine by any except themselves. Is such then the fact? Is the theological scheme for example of the Unitarians,—to whom Dr. M. particularly refers as discarding the use of creeds—entirely unknown to all other denominations? Is no knowledge whatever possessed by the Presbyterian Churches of this country, of the doctrines held by those of the Congregational denomination? nor any thing known by any one of these churches of the views entertained by any of the others?

It would seem according to Dr. M., that a church never presents any indication of what its doctrinal system is in the theological scheme which it employs its pastor to incul-

cate. Its selecting a Calvinist or an Arminian, a Socinian or an Universalist for its teacher, and listening to him with satisfaction from year to year,—and simply because he believes and preaches as he does,—furnishes no evidence at all that its own belief corresponds in any degree with his. Nor do its members furnish any such evidence by individually professing and advocating that belief in their conversation, approving and recommending such books as inculcate it, nor least of all by conforming their lives to its dictates. All that is ever done by a church that can convey a knowledge of its views to others, is comprised in the single act of publicly adopting and promulgating a written creed? The absurdity of these representations is however sufficiently apparent. Creeds and confessions have no such peculiar influence as Dr. M. ascribes to them. The faith of those churches which have no published creeds, and their views of the doctrinal systems held by other churches, are as well known to others, as are theirs in which those standards of doctrine have had the longest prevalence. There is no body of churches in christendom with whose theological system other denominations are better acquainted, than with that of the orthodox Congregationalists of New-England; and it is known simply by its being taught from their pulpits, inculcated in their books, and exemplified in their lives.

Dr. M. is equally in error in assuming that an exact knowledge of the doctrinal system of a church may be gained from its public creed;—at least from such creeds as

those which he so warmly eulogises as fitted to convey that information. There is nothing in the Presbyterian confession from which it can be perceived with certainty what their views who have subscribed it are, on all the doctrines of which they are accustomed to treat. Can any one from that alone, tell precisely what their belief is for example, respecting the doctrine of eternal generation? Yet the differences of opinion which they entertain and inculcate on that subject—if carried to the results which the principles they involve authorise—are undoubtedly of great importance. Or can any one determine with certainty what views they all entertain of man's ability or inability to yield obedience to the divine requirements, and of the foundation of his responsibility; of the nature and extent of the atonement; of the nature of saving faith, and several other fundamental subjects? The most palpable and important differences are known to exist in their doctrines on these topics.

V. It would seem—from the passage last quoted and others connected with it,—that Dr. M. likewise regards creeds and confessions *as the only means by which a church can ascertain the views which others entertain of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and determine whether they are orthodox or heretical.*

"The duty of drawing and publicly manifesting a line between those, who while they profess in general to believe the Bible, really deny all its essential doctrines, and those who simply and humbly receive "the truth as it is in Jesus"—"can only be done"—"by extracting certain articles

of faith from the scriptures according to her understanding of them, and comparing with these articles the professed belief of those whom she supposes to be heretics. And what is this but extracting from the scriptures a confession of faith—a creed, and applying it as a test of sound principles?" "Before the church as such can detect heretics, and cast them out from her bosom; before she can raise her voice in "a day of rebuke and of blasphemy" against prevailing errors, her governors and members must be agreed what is truth—must have some accredited permanent document exhibiting what they have agreed to consider as truth." pp. 16, 17.

Without a written creed then "drawn out" and formally adopted, a church can have no standard of truth adapted to its exigencies,—no adequate criterion by which to decide what doctrinal systems are right or wrong. The scriptures are quite insufficient for the purpose. Nothing can be determined in the inquiry after truth by an appeal to them; nor can any thing short of a creed, succeed in leading men to develope their sentiments, and prove "a discerner" of their thoughts. Such "an accredited permanent document" however, is an all-powerful instrument of detecting and "manifesting" their faith. Try them by the scriptures as long as you please, and you can make no approximation toward discovering their views. Ply them with all the interrogatories that human sagacity can invent, and you will be equally unsuccessful. They are completely impregnable by all such methods of assault. But approach them with a creed, and the scene is totally changed. Like Sampson when shorn of his locks, they are at once divested of all capacity for resistance and concealment, and thrown

within your power;—like Satan when touched by the spear of Ithuriel, their whole character is instantly developed to your view.

Those therefore on the other hand, who have unfortunately neglected the use of this potent instrument, are of course,—whatever may be their impressions to the contrary,—totally uncertain what doctrines are held by any of their fellow-men. They have egregiously imposed on themselves in imagining that they were authorised to infer what the sentiments of those around them are, from what they advance in their public discourses, published works, and private conversation.

Such a disparagement of the scriptures and eulogy of the works of men by a monk of the dark ages would have excited but little surprise, but comes with an ill grace from a theological Professor of the present day. It is idle to deny that these representations are a reproach on the sacred volume. If as Dr. M. teaches, the word of God is not adequate to the wants of the church as a standard of doctrine,—if it is impossible without a creed, to distinguish sufficiently between truth and error, the reason must of course lie in an insufficiency of the scriptures alone to decide what the truth is. If the scriptures plainly teach all the fundamental doctrines of theology, why is a creed necessary to lead men to a knowledge of them; or to determine whether the views which they entertain of religion are correct or not?

If however such difficulties do exist in determining without a creed what doctrinal systems are correct, it is still

ridiculous to imagine that they can be obviated by the use of such a formulary. For these difficulties must of course have existed in respect to those who have *formed* written creeds, as much as they can in respect to those who now go directly and only to the Bible to decide what the truth is; and consequently there must always be as much room,—as far as that consideration is concerned—to distrust those decisions respecting the doctrines of revelation which were formed in some past period by a reference to the word of God, and recorded in a written creed, as those which are formed by a present examination of the sacred volume, and are orally expressed.

VI. Creeds according to Dr. M., *are the only instrument by which a church can prevent the intrusion into it of every species of heretics.*

"Can a body of worshippers composed of Calvinists, Arminians, Pelagians, Arians and Socinians all pray, and preach and commune together profitably and comfortably, each retaining the sentiments, feelings and language appropriate to his denomination? This would be indeed to make the house of God a miserable Babel. What! can those who believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be God, equal with the Father, and worship him accordingly;—and those who consider all such worship as abominable idolatry;—those who cordially renounce all dependence on their own works or merit for justification before God, relying entirely on his rich grace "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;"—and those who pronounce all such reliance fanatical, and man's own righteousness the sole ground of hope:—can persons who cherish these irreconcilably opposite sentiments and feelings on the most important of all subjects, unite with edification in the same prayers, listen from sabbath to sabbath to the same instructions; and sit together in comfort at

the same sacramental table? As well might Jews and Christians worship together in the same temple. They must either be perfectly indifferent to the great subjects on which they are thus divided, or all their intercourse must be productive of jarring and distress."—"Holding these things to be self-evident, how I ask, is any church to guard itself from that baleful discord, that perpetual strife of feeling, if not of words and conduct, which must ensue, when it is made up of such heterogeneous materials? Nay, how is a church to avoid the guilt of harbouring in its bosom, and of countenancing by its fellowship the worst heresies that ever disgraced the christian name?"

"The inference plainly is that no church can hope to maintain a homogeneous character;—no church can be secure either of purity or peace for a single year;—*nay no church can effectually guard against the highest degrees of corruption and strife, without some test of truth, explicitly agreed upon, and adopted by her, in her ecclesiastical capacity;* something *recorded;* something *publicly known;* something capable of being *referred to* when most needed; which not merely this or that private member *supposes* to have been received; but to which the church *as such* has *agreed to adhere* as a bond of union. In other words a church, in order to maintain "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and love," *must have* a CREED—a WRITTEN CREED—to which she has formally given her assent, and to a conformity to which her ministrations are pledged. As long as such a test is *faithfully applied*, she cannot fail of being in some good degree united and harmonious; and when nothing of the kind is employed, I see not how she can be expected, without a miracle, to escape all the evils of discord and corruption." pp. 10, 11. 14, 15.

Without a creed then, a church must be a more wretchedly discordant and contentious, and therefore a more unchristian society than any other on earth. And such is actually the character of all which have neglected the use

of such a formulary. Nothing it seems can prevent it. The fact that a pastor inculcates the doctrinal system for example of a rigid Calvinist, cannot tend at all to hinder the intrusion into his church of those who entirely reject those sentiments, and hold the opposing doctrines of Arminianism or Unitarianism;—nor on the other hand, can the fact that he teaches one of these latter systems, and impugns and condemns Calvinism as erroneous and absurd, operate to prevent persons of that belief from placing themselves under his pastoral charge. Nor can any such influence be exerted by the discipline of a church, nor by the doctrinal views entertained and advocated by its members, and exemplified in their practice. On the contrary—we are to believe—precisely the opposite effect is produced. The more pure the doctrines of a minister are, the more irresistible will be the inclination of all those who reject them to connect themselves with his church, in order to hear what they execrate. The church being "a city set on a hill," unless surrounded by those "fences against error," attracts to itself all sorts of spiritual outcasts and heretics, much as gay and wealthy capitals allure from the neighbouring regions every species of vagabonds and villains. Heretics rush headlong into the light which it diffuses around itself, like the insects of evening into our candles.

The admirable evidences exhibited in these views of a thorough acquaintance with human nature, and the character and condition of the churches of our country, need no illustration or praise.

VII. To complete the climax of his eulogy of creeds and confessions, *he represents that the compilation and publication of them is the only method by which a church can render itself of any "value."*

"Of WHAT VALUE, let me ask, had the Waldenses and Albigenses been, as WITNESSES OF THE TRUTH,—as LIGHTS IN THE WORLD, amidst the darkness of surrounding corruption; especially of WHAT VALUE had they been to the church in succeeding times, and to *us* at the present day, if they had not formed and transmitted to posterity those celebrated CONFESSIONS OF FAITH, as precious as they are memorable, which we read in their history. and which stand as so many monumental testimonies to the true "gospel of the grace of God?" Without THESE how should we ever have known in what manner they interpreted the Bible; or WHEREIN THEY DIFFERED FROM THE GROSSEST HERETICS who lived at the same time and professed to receive the same Bible?" p. 18.

A more extraordinary sentiment it is imagined never fell from the pen of a theological disputant. That these churches then, were eminent above all others of that and perhaps subsequent ages for their *piety*, is a matter of no significance whatever. Their purity simplicity and rectitude of life, their benevolence toward each other and those around them, their fear of God and ardent esteem and veneration for the institutions of the gospel, that they held the scriptures in such high respect above the writings of men and dictates of aspiring ecclesiastics, that they educated their offspring with so much care in the knowledge and practice of christianity, and publicly inculcated its doctrines in their churches and wherever they were driven by their enemies with such simplicity and boldness, that they

exposed and denounced with such fidelity the corruptions of the apostate churches in the midst of which it was their lot to exist, encountered from them the most cruel persecutions for the gospel's sake, and in immense multitudes suffered martyrdom with a meekness and fortitude that were never surpassed, and were thus the means of perpetuating an eminently pure and numerous church from one generation to another through a period of several centuries when religion was nearly extinguished in every other section of christendom, and finally of planting the seeds of the reformation;—all these eminent excellencies of their lives,—this sacred fidelity to the cause of Christ amid the storms of persecution,—this illustrious instrumentality in turning "many to righteousness" and causing them to "shine as the stars for ever and ever," subserved no useful purpose whatever!—did not render them of any "VALUE" to their or subsequent generations!—constituted nothing "wherein they differed from the grossest heretics who lived at the same time!" The whole sum of their usefulness was comprised in the single act of compiling and publishing their creeds!

Sentiments like these may very probably have been entertained by the monsters of cruelty who calumniated plundered and murdered them for their obedience to the gospel, but it strikes one with astonishment that a Doctor of the Presbyterian Church should have been found at the present day who could have even inadvertently thrown out such views, and imagined them to be adapted to subserve his cause.

Yet all this follows undoubtedly very naturally from the other parts of Dr. M.'s system. If as he represents, without creeds men can neither acquire a consistent system of truth; nor preserve it after having acquired it; nor communicate a knowledge of it to others; nor even ascertain whether others possess a knowledge of it, or not; nor finally hinder the church from becoming a most heretical unholy and unhappy society;—then it is unquestionable that the formation and publication of such an instrument which shall prevent all this guilt and misery is a more important work of usefulness than any other.

Such are the extravagant pretensions Dr. M. has thought proper to advance in favour of creeds and confessions. Not content with a temperate vindication of them from unjust aspersions, he has chosen to arrogate for them all possible excellence. They are the grand key of knowledge,—the only safe interpreters of revelation and directories of faith; —the only means of purity and peace in the Redeemer's kingdom;—in short the sole instrument by which the church can be of any "VALUE." Were they to be blotted from existence, the last hope of man would be extinguished;—earth would feel

> ———"the wound, and Nature from her seat
> Sighing through all her works," give "signs of wo
> That all was lost."

But these absurd pretences have been sufficiently refuted. It deserves to be added as a more general and very important objection to his claims for the usefulness of these for-

mularies, that all his arguments in their favour contemplate them abstractly from any consideration of the nature of the doctrines which they contain. Their representation is, that creeds generally have that adaptation to accomplish the ends for which he recommends them, with respect to their doctrinal systems, without any consideration what those systems are. They are therefore as applicable to one creed as another, and present equally good reasons to all denominations of the religious and irreligious throughout the world, to adopt the use of such formularies to promote the knowledge and belief of their several systems of faith. If from its nature a Calvinistic creed will produce the effects which he represents, respecting the system which it inculcates; for the same reason an Arminian or Unitarian creed will also produce corresponding effects in respect to its doctrinal system; and so of the creed of a Catholic, or Mussulman; an Idolater or Atheist.

But if creeds actually possess such an adaptation to produce the effects respecting the systems of belief which they inculcate, as he imputes to them; then, as the faith of by far the greater portion of men,—as he himself undoubtedly believes—is egregiously and fatally erroneous, it is manifestly, in place of being an excellence, a formidable objection to them;—inasmuch as it fits them to be the instruments of vastly greater evil than good, and renders it inevitable that their general adoption by the various sects of the religious and irreligious, instead of producing benefits, would prove a source of immeasurable mischief. It

would extinguish at once all hope that the truth is ever to gain ascendancy over error, or enjoy a wider prevalence than it has already attained, and make it certain that every species of false religion that now ravages the earth, is to continue to prevail to an equal extent to the end of time.

But let the adaptation of those formularies to produce the effects he ascribes to them in respect to their systems of doctrine be what it may, still manifestly no claim for their *usefulness* can be admitted any farther than the systems which they inculcate accord with the doctrines of the Bible.

It cannot be of any service to a church that those of its "members who have neither leisure nor habits of thinking sufficiently close," are led by a creed to persuade themselves that the doctrines which it teaches are contained in the Bible, and to endeavour to lead others to embrace them, to regard all as heretics who doubt the truth of their system, and exclude them from their fellowship;—unless their creed is correct. If its scheme is a false one, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," in place of doing good, it must of course prove a source of mischief, precisely in proportion to the influence which it exerts.

It cannot follow therefore at all as a matter of course, that a church will derive any benefit from adopting and employing a creed, nor that it will not subject itself to great evil. The result must depend on the character of the creed.

This consideration Dr. M. seems entirely to have overlooked, and has constructed his argument as though if a church would only adopt and rigidly use a creed, it would secure to itself all the advantages which he recommends them as capable of procuring. The course he has pursued is precisely such as his would be, who should undertake to prove that a written civil constitution would be useful to a political community, without any consideration what its nature should be.

He has fallen into this false reasoning apparently by imagining that *unity* in faith is as a thing of course, one of the most important blessings which a church can enjoy, and that differences in sentiment, no matter how they occur, are the greatest calamity that can befall it. (pp. 10, 11.) It however is manifestly very far from being a matter of course that the occurrence of differences in doctrinal belief renders the condition of a church worse. It obviously depends entirely on what system it was which it previously united in entertaining, and what the new system is which the dissenting members adopt. If the doctrines which prevailed antecedently to the division were erroneous, and the change consists in their rejection by a part of the members and the adoption of truth in their place, it is certainly very far from deserving to be condemned as a crime or deprecated as a calamity. Better that truth should be embraced at the expense of divisions and discord, than that it should not be embraced at all. Was it a calamity to the church in the fourteenth century that Wickliffe rejected many of its

false doctrines and ridiculous superstitions, and embraced and taught the truth in their place? or that Jerome, Luther, Erasmus and others imitated his example?

It is sufficiently apparent from the foregoing discussion, that it was not without good reason that Mr. Duncan addressed to the Directors, Professors and Students of the Princeton Seminary the doctrines and animadversions before alluded to, of his sermon; and that he merits for them the hearty approbation of the friends of truth.

The bold avowal to which it has led of the views and purposes of the instructers of that institution—so far as this Lecture may be regarded as exhibiting them—forms an important era to the Presbyterian Church. It is now shown demonstratively that it is not so much their object unconditionally, and at all events, to teach the doctrines of the Bible let them be what they may, as it is simply to teach that the doctrines of a sect, in other words, that the doctrines of the Presbyterian confession, according to *their construction* of them, *are the doctrines of the Bible;* and to discountenance the adoption by their students of any other views;—that therefore it is not an institution directly and absolutely for the study and inculcation of what the scriptures teach, but rather for the study and inculcation of the doctrines of the confession;—and consequently that the purpose for which the word of God is there used is, not absolutely to ascertain what it reveals, but to support the

doctrines,—according to their interpretation of them—of the creed.

They seem to have deliberately formed the purpose of obstructing the avenues to the knowledge and belief of any other system than their own, of putting down all inquiry whether it is right or not, and driving from the church all who venture to dissent from their views. And to what extravagancies have their determination and zeal carried them? To the shameless disparagement of the word of God, as not only incompetent to furnish "those private members of churches who have neither leisure nor habits of thinking sufficiently close" with "a consistent system of truth,"—but totally inadequate also to the wants of all members, whether private or official, as a test of truth and means of purity and peace:—to the bold pretence that no minister of the Presbyterian Church whose views have ceased to accord with the doctrines of the confession, has a right any longer to retain his pastoral office and authority to teach:—and finally to the ruthless denunciation of all those churches which do not use creeds, as utterly "indifferent to truth," "ignorant of the faith once delivered to the saints;" and the hot-beds of error and corruption!

Their bold announcement of these views and purposes is obviously a highly important step, and deserves the most serious consideration of the friends of truth and the public at large. And is it possible that they can be regarded by them as deserving the sanction of their approbation and support? Can it be that they can acquiesce in these re-

proaches of the word of God, and be willing that in the Seminary that is to furnish so many of their future teachers of religion, that sacred volume in place of being honoured as the oracle of truth, should be degraded to the mere instrumentality of giving currency to the peculiar doctrines of these instructers? There is a wide difference between going, and teaching a learner of religion conscientiously to go to the volume of revelation, for the purpose of ascertaining what it teaches, and being guided by its instructions; and merely resorting to it for something which may be employed to favour the doctrines of a sect.

Can it meet their sanction that candidates for the sacred office should be drilled through a course so adapted to circumscribe their knowledge to the peculiar scheme of their teachers, to inspire prejudice in place of just views respecting the systems of those from whom they differ, and thence to send them forth into the world the disciples of dogmatism and bigotry, unfurnished with the means of either respectably vindicating their own or opposing the views of others, and destined therefore alike to dishonour religion and disgrace themselves by the perpetual perplexity and defeat in which the collisions they are to experience with the varying opinions of their fellow-men must necessarily involve them?

Can the Presbyterian clergy regard with complacency these denunciations of so large a portion of their own number, as "chargeable with the sin of treacherously and basely doing evil that good may come," in continuing to

retain their office in the church, and teach what they regard as obviously the doctrines of the Bible? or approve these sweeping imputations of ignorance heresy and corruption, to the numerous orthodox churches of New-England with which they are in habits of friendly intercourse, and from which so many of themselves and the members of their churches have descended?

Can those especially who constitute the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church convince themselves that they are authorised to sanction such purposes and measures on the part of those whom they have selected to instruct the youth who are hereafter to fill their places in the church;—that the cause of truth, the dignity of religion, the honour of the Presbyterian Church and its prosperity, do not demand their interference to check the progress of this spirit, rescue the sacred volume from the degradation to which they have subjected it, and secure to candidates for the ministry the opportunity and means of acquiring a thorough acquaintance with their profession, and of being formed to be the friends and disciples of *truth*, in place of the followers of men and the partisans of a sect?

It cannot be. They have too much intelligence and candour, too great a respect for the word of God, too just a knowledge of their rights and obligations,—in a word, too much common sense and piety to leave it possible. To doubt it, were to despair. The hour that shall witness the sanction of the doctrines and spirit of the Lecture by a majority of the Presbyterian Churches, will terminate their

peace and prosperity. Can a church continue to enjoy peace, which shall denounce so large a portion of its ministers as heretics, "chargeable with the sin of treacherously and basely doing evil that good may come," who owe it to *mere sufferance* that they are not driven from their pulpits and flocks, to "join some other branch of the church," and thence shall denounce those flocks also, as equally guilty and deserving of excommunication for countenancing their doctrines and ministry? Can any one fail to see that if such denunciations were to have any efficiency or meaning whatever, they would inevitably lead to fatal divisions? The accomplishment of this is indeed the avowed object of the advocates of these doctrines;—to fix on all who dissent from their theological views the stigma of heresy, and drive them from the church as the enemies of truth;—to bend every minister and member to a servile submission to their dictation, at—I am constrained to fear—no matter what expense of right, of candour, of truth, or of happiness; and thus establish over them the most unholy and cruel of all usurpations, the iron tyranny of religious despots. Nor will they, unless arrested by the voice of truth and public opinion, the rebuke of ecclesiastical authority, or the hand of God, abandon their purpose or relax their exertions until this is accomplished.

Can a church expect to enjoy an enlightened judicious and useful ministry, a large part of whose candidates are to be reared under the tutelage of such instructers, imbued with their spirit, drilled into their doctrines, taught to

shudder at the thought of independently investigating theological subjects for themselves, and accustomed to expect disgrace and ruin, and denounce them on others as the inevitable price of diverging from the path marked out for them by their theological guides? Or can a church expect the blessing of God which openly dishonours his word, by denying it the office—for which it was designed and revealed—of alone determining what is truth; subjecting it to the degradation of subordination and subserviency to the creed, and substituting for the inquiry "what saith the Lord?" in the search after truth, the mere question, what saith that standard which has been "drawn out and adopted by the collected wisdom of the church?"

These considerations obviously most deeply concern the obligations and welfare of the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church. There is no part of christendom where dogmatism intolerance and the wretched desire to obstruct free investigation, embarrass the progress of knowledge, and authoritatively dictate what shall be believed and taught in religion, are more entirely out of place than in that body; and to arrest and expel them, they must be met in the commencement of their efforts. If left to mature and diffuse themselves without obstruction, no one can predict to what pernicious strength they may advance, nor what irremediable evils they may occasion.

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